

Several Discourses,

VIZ.

I. Of Purity and Charity.

II. Of Repentance.

III. Of seeking first the Kingdom
of God.

BY

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JOHN W. COOPER

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OF THE CHURCH

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T O T H E
R E A D E R.

I Shall speak a little concerning the Author of the ensuing Discourses, and then leave them to speak for themselves; for if they be good, they need no commendatory Preface, and if they be not, they deserve none.

I must not say much of him, because of the long and intimate friendship I had with him, which may render me suspected of partiality towards him: And indeed I need not, since he was a person so well known, both in the University of Cambridge, where he was bred, and was a Fellow of Magdalen College there, and an eminent Tutor for many years; and likewise here in London where he spent several years of the last

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part of his Life, and was intimately acquainted with the most eminent persons of his own Profession. He was first Chaplain to the Right Honourable Sir Orlando Bridgman, Lord Keeper of the great Seal; and afterwards Minister of St. George's in Southwark, where besides his constant pains in preaching and catechising, he employed a great part of his time in offices and acts of Charity, in visitation of the Sick, and a most tender and compassionate care of the Poor, which in that Parish were exceeding many, besides the two great Prisons of the Kings Bench and Marshalsea, which he often visited, and bestowed there not only his own Charity, but all that by his interest and solicitation he could obtain from others; by which means he not only continually relieved but every year releas'd a very considerable number of poor Prisoners for small debts, to the great comfort of many poor Families. This, together with his exemplary conversation among them in all humility and kindness and meekness of wisdom, made him to be exceedingly beloved
in

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in his Parish during his continuance with them, and his departure from them to be as greatly lamented. For about a year before his death he was removed to Barns, not far from London; where he was seized upon by a very dangerous and malignant Fever, of which he died, and several of his Family.

It pleased the wise providence of God, whose ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts, to take this good man from us in the ripeness of his age, when he was capable of doing the greatest service to the Church of God, and in a time when he was most likely to have contributed considerably to it, as being by the incomparable sweetness of his temper, and prudence of his behaviour admirably fitted to allay those heats which then began to break out, but are since blown up to all the degrees of a violent and implacable enmity, by the skill and industry of a crafty and restless Party among us, playing upon our weakness, and persuading us to receive odious Names
of

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of distinction, and to fling them like Squibs and Fire-balls at one another, to make the Philistines sport. So that we have great reason to lament the loss of so useful a man in so needful a time.

I shall only mention those good qualities and vertues which were more remarkable in him. His great piety towards God, the native simplicity of his mind and manners, the singular kindness of his conversation, and his cheerful readiness to every good work; but above all the sincerity of his friendship, for I never knew any man that upon all occasions served his friend with that forwardness and zeal and unwearied diligence as he would do, and with less consideration of himself and his own interest. He was infinitely troubled to see the abounding of iniquity and the abatement of charity among us, but he did not live to see the worst of it, and to what a height our senseless heats and animosities are since risen. God was pleased to take him away from that unpleasant sight which would certainly have been

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as grievous to him as to any man living.

He never, that I know of, publish'd any thing in Print, except only a Preface to that excellent Book of his learned Friend Dr. Cumberland, of the Laws of Nature: Partly perhaps out of Modesty, but chiefly I think out of Judgment; as deeming it best, when a man is at his own liberty and urg'd thereto by no pressing occasion, to defer the Business of publick-writing to the most mature and improv'd age of his life. But whatever his reason was, it is not fit that those weighty and well digested Discourses which he left behind him should be suppress'd, and the Publick defrauded of the Benefit and Advantage of them. And though they are only transcrib'd from his ordinary Sermon-Notes, and want the exactness they would have had, if they had been design'd and prepar'd for the Press by his own hand, yet I think in the main they have the perfection which he chiefly aimed at, in that they are very

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well fitted to do good, and to make those that read them wiser and better. For he thoroughly understood the nature of Religion, the excellent design, and the happy effects of it, where it is sincerely embrac'd and entertain'd; and he knew how to distinguish genuine and substantial Piety from that which is counterfeit and superficial: He had likewise a just and lively sense of the mighty concernment and Importance of Religion both to the private and publick, the present and future, the temporal and eternal happiness of men; which made him seek out all sorts of Arguments to convince them of the absolute necessity, and unspeakable advantages of Religion, and all kinds of Motives and Inducements to perswade and allure them to the practice of it; that so by one consideration or other he might take hold of all capacities and tempers of men. But this will much better appear by a careful perusal of the following Discourses, then by any labour'd Commendation of them.

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To the Reader.

There are, besides these which are here publish'd, several other Discourses of the same Author, not less useful and considerable than these, which will in due time be prepar'd for the Press, if these meet with that Acceptance as may encourage the publication of them.

Jo. Tillotson.

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A

DISCOURSE

OF

Purity and Charity.

JAMES I. 27.

Pure Religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the World.



RELIGION is undoubtedly Man's greatest Concernment; for it's that on which his present Happiness doth principally depend, and his future wholly : So, as no Man can be truly happy here, nor at all hereafter, who is not really Religious ; and he that is, is out of Danger of Misery here on
B 3 Earth,

Earth, as well as certain of the Joys of Heaven.

It makes him substantially happy at present, tho it be unattended with the Riches, or Honours, or Sensual Delights, or any other External Goods; for he enjoys the Pleasures of a quiet Mind, hath the Satisfaction of a Conscience that gives Testimony to his Actions; he doth that which he knows God approves: and then to compleat his Felicity, he lives in the pleasant Fore-sight of future Glory, in the joyful Expectation of a great Reward, when the Day of Retribution shall come.

In short; the necessity of Religion, in order to our Happiness, appears from this: Because no Man that is not religious, can be either acceptable to God, or pleasing to himself; and no Man can be happy without both these, they are both so essential to Happiness.

But as it's necessary Man should be of some, it's no less necessary he should be of the true Religion. A false Religion may be of as little avail, nay, perhaps more prejudicial to him that's of it, than none at all; the least that can be said of it, is, that it's labour lost, that a Man takes pains to no purpose: He travels in a Way that will never bring him to Heaven.

But that's not all, for it may be to ill purpose. It's too often that Men's Religion leads them to Misery; that it has only this Effect to make them sin with more boldness, and to commit unnatural Wickednesses without Reluctancy before, or Regret after; to murder innocent Men, the Disciples of our Saviour, thinking they do God Service; to cast off natural Re-

Relations, to disobey Parents because of *Corban*; and rebel against Governours under shew of Zeal for God's Glory; to violate Oaths and Promises, by Vertue of a Dispensation from Christ's Vicar; to commit Adulteries and Incests, under colour of Christian Liberty: and all under Pretence, and with warrant of Religion.

Now these Practices do certainly lead to Misery. *There is a Way, saith Solomon, that seemeth right unto a Man, but the End thereof is the Ways of Death*: Prov. 16. 25. And these are such Ways I am sure.

Thus greatly are we concern'd to look about us to see not only that we have a Religion, but that it be the right: Wherefore it behoves us all to be well satisfied what *true Religion is*, and wherein it consists chiefly, that we may know whether we be truly religious, or not.

That we may be assisted in this, let us consider this Text, which peculiarly refers to the *Gnosticks*, who lived in the Apostles times: They were a sort of Men, who placed Religion in high Speculations, and subtil Disquisitions concerning the Essence and Persons of the Godhead, and Angels, and other Matters far remote from Sense, or the common Conceptions.

Besides; they had framed a Religion, that was very consistent with gross and brutish Sensuality, and immoderate Love to this World; a Religion that should yield and give place to their worldly Enjoyments, and forbidden Gratifications.

They might deny Christ, and disown their Religion, to preserve an Estate, or to save their Lives; and were regardless of their Carriage to Men. They were too high flown in their Speculations, to mind Practice; and were so much taken up in Theories of God and Angels, that they considered not Men. They were too sublime and spiritual to stoop to Morality.

In sum; their Religion was so Metaphysical and abstracted, that it had no Influence on their Practice towards others, or their Affections to this World.

Now, in Opposition to their Mistakes, St. James gives us a short, but plain and full Description of Religion. We will consider the Words particularly.

[*Religion.*] This properly signifies those Actions that immediately refer to God as their Object; but is commonly used to signify our whole Duty to God and Men; and it well it may, for these two are inseparable. He that loves God as he ought, loves his Brother; and he who loves not his Brother, loves not God: 1 John 3: 17. & 4: 20.

A Man that's truly good, is thoroughly so; he that's religious toward God, is virtuous to Men. Nay, I believe when we have examined these Words narrowly, we shall find that a good Life is the best and only Religion; and that the best Worship we can give to God, is to do good to Men. When they see and feel our good Works, not only we, but they glorify God.

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The Apostle adds the Epithets which signifie the inseparable Properties, or Effects of this Religion; [καθαροὶ καὶ ἀμώκτοι.] True Religion is *pure* and *undefiled*; it's without Spot or Blemish; and where it's entertained, will make its Subjects so too: It washes away all the Stains and Filthiness which Sin had brought with it into our Souls; for only that can pollute, *Mat.* 15. 19, 20, 21. [καθὰ τὸ θεόν, *apud Deum*, with God,] *i. e.* in God's Account: Mistaken Man may think otherwise; but he who is the Author and principal Object of all our Religion, who is the only fit Judge of what Religion is, and who are religious, he saith thus.

And the Father.] This Word is one of the best Explications of what God is to us; for *Father* signifies both Authority and Affection, what he is in himself, and what to us; that he is the Author and Preserver of Beings, that were from him, and like to him; and thus he is both in respect of our Natures and Vertues. He made us to be, and by his powerful Providence keeps us in Being. His good Spirit makes us good, and we are kept so by the Continuance of that powerful Assistance.

In our Beings we are like to God, our Souls are Rays from his Sun; and in our Vertues we are still more Partakers of the Divine Nature.

To visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Afflictions.] That is, to be kind and compassionate to those that are in Misery, to those that want our Help, to those that are not likely to make us any other Retribution, than
Prayers

Prayers and good Wishes sent to Heaven for us ; to love those whom we cannot fear ; to do good to them, who (if we do not) cannot hurt us.

And he particularly mentions Visiting, because that's more than sending : for he that sends, he only gives his Present ; but he that visits, offers himself for the Relief of him that wants : and Man may be more serviceable to Man, than any Creature in this visible World, and therefore is the very Sight and Presence of him (especially a Friend) so reviving.

In their Afflictions,] of what sort soever, if want of Estate, if Sicknes, if trouble of Mind. Some will visit in Prosperity, not in the Day of Trouble ; those Visits are rather Kindnesses to themselves, than their Neighbours : Such Visits I do not blame, but commend, because they are instrumental to increase Love, and because they acquaint us with the Afflictions and Wants of our Brethren, and so give us an Opportunity of expressing our Compassion and Charity. And it would make all our Visits much better, if we considered what are the Afflictions of our Acquaintance, and how they may be helped out of them.

Consider the Good we can do them by good Counsel, by innocent Mirth, and pleasant and harmless Diversion, or any other Way, and do that.

And remember, be sure, the Afflicted ; they that by Sicknes or Want are confined to the House, have more need of our Visits.

To keep himself unspotted from the World.] That is, to preserve himself from being intangled

tangled by inordinate Affections to any of the Things of the World ; that neither the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye , nor the Pride of Life defile his Soul ; that he neither desires Riches, nor affects Honour immoderately, nor inordinately, that is, more than they deserve, than other things that are better ; nor any Way, but in order to the end of Vertue and Happines, to which they serve : nor that he indulge himself in any sensual Gratifications that are forbidden by God, that are unnatural, or contrary to the Law of Society ; such are Gluttony, Drunkenness, Fornication, Adultery, &c.

Thus then to keep our selves unspotted, &c. is, when notwithstanding all the Difficulty and Opposition we meet with from the World, and all Temptations to the contrary that we have from Things or Men, we yet continue to behave our selves towards God with all that Love and Reverence that becomes us, and have an expresse Faith and Hope in him, and Love to him, Dependance and Submission, &c.

And when we are just and faithful to all our Promises and Covenants, honest and true in all our Dealings with Men, always doing all the good Offices we can : when our Love of our selves and Honour doth not make us contemn and scorn others, nor build our selves a Reputation on the Ruins of their Name : when our Love of Money doth not make us oppress the Poor, and Extortioners, nor defraud our Neighbour, nor yet uncharitable ; but we can and do freely and heartily part with it for the Relief of them : when we love Men better than Money,

Money, and willingly expend that to serve the Ends of their Welfare and Happiness.

And lastly, When our bodily Inclinations and Appetites do not draw us into Sin : we do not indulge our selves in any forbidden Gratifications of the Flesh ; when we are not bound by the silken Cords of Voluptuousness. We are not required to be so spiritualized, as to have no Sense of the Body and its Concerns, to have no regard to this Life and World, and Things of Sense ; for then we must go out of the World, we must put off our Body, we must be perpetually doing Violence to Nature, we must use no Form or Words in our Worship of God.

It is not meant that we should live here as Angels do, and as we shall do when we are advanced to an higher State ; but only this, that God and spiritual Things should have the Preheminence with us ; that our Souls by love to God and Goodness, should be rescued from all Inordinacy of Love to this World ; that Sense, and corporal Affections, and love of Life, and of all the Supports and Delights of it, should be subject to Reason, and the Power of our Minds, orderly and in their own place : that is, that we should value all Things according to their real Goodness, and in proportion to the Usefulness they have to our greatest Perfection and Happiness.

In short ; When I say, Religion is to make us Spiritual ; I mean, the Soul is not to be under the Power of sensible Things, but is to govern all corporeal Inclinations and Appetites ; and that the Soul is to be in all we do on religious Accounts. That's the first. And

And then by Charity, I understand a Propension to do all good Offices where-ever there is want, and we have power and inclination to do good; where nothing but Indigence and Opportunity invite us, where we can hope for nothing of Recompence from those we have deserved well of.

So that to be pure from Covetousness, Pride, or Lust, which are the Spots wherewith the World defiles Men, and to have an universal Love and Compassion to the Miserable, is the pure and undefiled Religion here spoken of.

Now that the Religion which is true doth consist in Spiritualness and Charity; this will appear, if we consider the Author, the Objects, the Subjects, and the Ends of true Religion. The Author is God: The Objects are God and Man principally. The Subjects, Man. The End of all true Religion, is our Perfection, the Good of Man.

First; It very well becomes God to give a Religion, to which Purity, or Spiritualness and Charity are essential: for how can any Carriage or Behaviour be more suitable unto God, than this? How can any Laws be more Divine and God-like, than those that exact from us Spiritual-mindedness and Charity? If Religion be, as was alwas said, *Imitari quem colis*, what truer Religion can there be in the World than this? Wherein can we more imitate God, and be Partakers of the Divine Nature, than in these two Particulars; to purge our selves from Earthliness and Sensuality, and all worldly Affections, and to be compassionate and kind? *Nulla re magis ac-*

accedimus ad Deos, quam Benevolentia.

This Religion then, very well becomes the Author and principal Object of true Religion, that is, God ; and therefore we argue it is the true Religion.

Farther; if we consider the other chief Object and Subject of it, that is, Man ; we shall find it agreeable to his Nature also. The best that is in Man, is his Mind ; and the best Work of that is Love. Now in true Religion, that ought most to be regarded, which is best, and most principal in us. And,

Lastly ; This tends to our greatest Perfection and Happiness to rescue our Souls from Inordinacy of Desire, from immoderate Appetites ; to set them at liberty from undue Affections to the Things of this World : This is certainly a great Advancement of their power, when no Clog of Sensuality and Brutishness, or earthly Affections, can pull them down, but they may soar aloft after Truth and Goodness ; may follow their own most natural Inclinations, and pursue Knowledge and Virtue : This must needs have a great Tendency to make them perfect ; when they may freely converse with most excellent Objects, and those that are spiritual, as they may when they are not hindred by worldly Desires, this greatly exalts them.

Men are generally by inordinate Desires of earthly things chained to this World, as Slaves to their Gallies, and are tugging hard at the Direction of their Master, Pride, or Covetousness, or Sensuality : And whilst they are in this Condition, the Soul can make no
Pro-

Progress towards Happiness, but goes further from it, is more and more depressed and sunk down into Brutishness. Now the Design of Religion is to set Man at liberty from this sad Slavery, to rescue him from under the Tyranny of those Affections, and Earthly-mindedness, into the Freedom of Reason, and Compliance with the Divine Will, *John 8. 32.*

Religion secures us from being hurried up and down by the impetuous and unreasonable Desires, which Ignorance and Folly have raised in them after these Things below.

The Sum of all is, That no Religion can better become God to give than this, whereby Man is made so like to him : Nor is any more honourable and acceptable to him than this Purity and Charity, which are so exact an Imitation of Divine Perfections.

None can be more suitable to human Nature, than that which reduces him into his true natural State, wherein Reason is predominant over Passion, and his Mind rules over corporal Inclinations and Affections to terrene and outward Things, and is not held in Bondage to them.

Nor doth any thing better become him, or is more natural than Benignity, whether we consider his Nature, or look on him in a Society of his own kind, where he needs the help of others, and they his.

And I am sure he is capable of no greater Perfection, than to have his Mind advanced above all Contagion from this lower World; that tho it walk among Snares and Gins, it shall not be entrapped; tho it walk on the troubled
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Waters ; yet, like its Saviour, it will not sink ; tho all the Glory of the World be offer'd, yet it shall not all be able to tempt it to break its Allegiance to God : When all the Opposition and Difficulty it meets with from this World and Body, do not hinder it from pursuing vertuous Resolves.

This is a brave Attainment, when the Soul, tho it converse in the World, is above it; whilst its being is on Earth, but Affections in Heaven; when it can use the World, and not abuse it, nor be abused by it.

This is like God, who, notwithstanding his busie Providence so much interests it self in the Administration of things, yet retains his spotless Purity, and is not sullied by them.

And there's none but knows how great and divine a Perfection Kindness and Good-will is : a propensity to do good, seeking Opportunities of Beneficence, is the most Man-like, yea, God-like Temper in the World; and the greatest perfection, not only of Earth, but Heaven. Nothing better than this, nothing beyond it : he that hath attained to it, is possessed of incomparably the greatest Good in the whole World.

I have begun to prove, that Purity and Charity are absolutely necessary to constitute any Man Religious ; and shall now proceed more particularly and distinctly.

By Religion, I understand Man's regard to God ; and by true Religion, a due regard to him ; and when it is in our whole Life, 'tis a through Religion, or a Carriage that is sutable to the Revelations God hath made of himself, and our Relations to him.

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According to this Explication, he is truly and throughly Religious, who in the whole Course of his Life, and Tenour of all his Actions, makes acknowledgment of the Divine Perfections, and the Circumstances in which Man stands to God, according to the Discoveries that God hath made of these; that is, who thinks and is affected, who speaks and acts, whose whole Conversation both with God and Man, is suitable to the excellent Nature and Works of God, and the reference we have to him: and he acts religiously, who doth or omits any action out of such a regard to God.

Particularly; It's Religion to think of God, as infinitely Powerful, Wise and Good; as the great Creator, Preserver and Governour of all things, and of our selves in particular; as having sent his Son, that he might by his Doctrine and Example instruct and perswade Man to a good Life, and by his Obedience and Suffering, make Way for the Exercise of Divine Goodness, in giving so full a Justification of God's Right, and the Goodness and Wisdom of his Laws; as having promised a great and eternal Reward to those that live well, and threatned everlasting Misery to the unrighteous and ungodly.

To think of God according to these, and such Discoveries as he hath made of himself, both in Nature and in Scripture-Revelation, and to be affected suitably, that is, to love and reverence, to trust in, and submit to him, as the Best of Beings; as one that hath right to us and all things; as the Wise and Good, and rightful Administrator of the whole World: to live in the joyful Expectation of Good that shall befall us in Ways
of

of well-doing ; and if we go out of those Ways to look for Wo and Misery ; to make our Supplications to him for a Supply of what we want, and to return our Thanks for what we enjoy. In short, to be careful to know, and desirous to do all that he declares his Will ; this is a short Epitome of what's, in all Men's Esteem, Religion.

Now we will consider how necessary it is for every Man, who hath this due Regard to God, to be, 1. Charitable : 2. Pure and Spotless from this World ; and shall shew that these are essential and principal Parts of true Religion, that he cannot be religious that wants them ; and he who lives in the due practice of them, cannot but be religious. These are themselves parts of Religion, and are necessarily consequent on, and derive from the other parts of it. This I shall endeavour to make out in several Particulars.

1. These two, Charity and Purity, are very principal Parts of Religion, because they are expressly commanded, they are Matter of the not only plain, but great Commands ; and to live in the Practice of them, is to perform Acts of high and great Obedience.

Now to comply with the Divine Will, and to live in Subjection to his Laws, is one of the most becoming and certain Acknowledgments that can be made by Man of the Divine Perfections ; for whosoever lives in Obedience to God, thereby declares that his Laws are just and good ; he shews he is satisfied in the Wisdom and Goodwill of his Governour : and his Submission of his Will to God's, shews that he owns God as his Superiour, he by this confesses his Right and Sove-

Sovereignty. So that Man's Obedience to the Law of God, is a very clear and certain Acknowledgment of the Divine Perfection, and of his own State of Inferiority and Subjection ; that is, it is a high Piece of Religion : such an one, as he who is destitute of it, cannot be accounted Religious ; whatsoever his Words and Professions are, howsoever he may in other Matters seem Religious, yet if he live in a Course of Disobedience to the known Law of God, that Man is not Religious ; tho his Praises of God be loud, and his Prayers many and long, tho he fast twice a Week to add Intenfeness to his Devotions, yet if he continue unjust or uncharitable, proud or covetous, or intemperate ; if he live in the Violation of any of the known Commands of God, all that he doth will not clear him from the Imputation of Wickedness.

Which shews that Obedience is a principal part of Religion : God of old declared that it was better than Sacrifice, and to hearken than the Fat of Lambs. Burnt-offerings and Sacrifice were Parts of Religion ; but Obedience is of greater Esteem with God, because it's a more full, and clear, and certain Acknowledgment of God, than the other. *Why call you me Lord and Master, (saith our Saviour) and do not the things I command you ?*

And now that I have shewn Obedience is so necessary a Part of Religion, and that no Man ought to be accounted Religious without it ; I will proceed to shew, that to be charitable and pure, are Instances of a great Obedience ; that these two are exprefs and great Commands.

God hath given us all the Assurance imaginable,

nable; that these are our Duties, because they are by Nature discovered, as well as supernaturally revealed to be his Will.

1. They are not meerly positive, but natural Laws, that require us to be pure and charitable: These are Laws written in our Hearts, our own Minds will direct us to them, and they are the easie, unforced Suggestions of our Souls. We can neither think of our selves, nor God, of our Brethren, nor the Things of this World; but the Conclusion will be Purity in our selves, Charity to others. We shall certainly be determined to preserve our selves from inordinate Love to the World, and we shall let out our selves in Love to our Brethren.

2. And if Nature teach us Love and Purity, as the Writings of the Heathens do sufficiently testifie, Scripture (I am sure) doth most plainly discover them to be the Will of God, as *Col. 3. 2, 12, 13, 14.* and multitude of other places.

Thus God hath, in both the Ways which he uses to manifest his Will, made known to us, that these two are our Duties. Whence I infer, not only that these are plain and clear, but also great Commands; for the greater any Command is, the clearer it is. Whatsoever is dark and obscure, is certainly not so very necessary to be believed or done. But here it is far otherwise, God hath shewed not only us that have the Scripture, but to all the World, that these two, to be pure and charitable, are good, and that he requires them at our Hands.

Only I will add, That the better any Action is, the more of intrinsick Goodness it hath in it, the greater is that Command which requires it.

By

By this we may know the Difference of Divine Commands, that so when they come in Competition, we may know which to prefer. So much for the first.

II. These are our best Imitation of, and nearest Assimulation to God. That the best Worship we can give God, is to imitate him, is a Truth generally confessed; and the Reason of it very plain, for all Adoration includes Love, and what we love, we endeavour to imitate, and be like to it; that is, what we love and value in another, we shall desire may be in our selves.

Again; There is no Man so unacquainted with the Designs of Religion, but he knows the Aim of it is, to assimilate Man to God, to make him Partaker of the Divine Nature, as far as he is capable.

What else can be the Design of those Discoveries God hath made of himself? Wherefore hath he shewn forth his great Glory to us? but that we should endeavour after those Perfections in our Degree and Measure, which are in him unlimited and infinite. We must think this the Design of the Omniscient and All-wise Author of our Religion, that when he manifests his own glorious Excellencies to us, we should aim at our Conformity to them, because it is the necessary Effect, and natural Product of such a Discovery: for the Self-love that is natural to Man, and that's commendable, will engage him to a Pursuit after all that's good for himself, which he sees in another.

Now whatsoever he sees in God, he concludes it must be excellently Good: Nothing but Per-

fection, and absolute Goodness and Excellency can be found in him. He is infinitely perfect, and compleatly happy; and therefore, whatsoever we know to be in him, we shall desire to be in us, because we desire to be happy.

Again; There is no Man who loves himself as he ought, but he would be as perfect as he can be; and there is no greater Perfection than to be like God, for he is the first and best, he's the chief principal Being; 'tis he that is the Original and Fountain of all Perfection. All other Beings derive from him, and he being the first, and the Original of all Good, is the Rule and Measure of it, according to that Maxim, *Primum in unoquoque genere est mensura reliquorum.*

In Sum; The more any Man comes to be like to God, the more perfect he must be, because God is the most perfect of all Beings.

This then being granted, I must also shew, that Love and Purity are the Perfections of God.

Whosoever either considers the Divine Nature by himself, or looks into the Discourses of the most rational Heathen, or will be determined by Scripture-Revelation, he must conclude these to be the Perfections of the Deity.

1. *Purity.* Scripture makes God the Patern and Copy of Purity, and tells us, the good Man that hopes for a Reward, purifies himself as God is pure, which supposes him to be the Exemplar.

Again; He is set out as Light, *in whom is no Darkness*; which signifies the spotless Purity of his Nature.

As for the Discourses of Heathen concerning God, tho some of the Poets, who gave more Liberty to their Fancies, than Truth and Reason would

would allow, described their Gods as very impure, as full of Revenge and Deceit, as intemperate and unchast: yet they were censured for this by the more sober and judicious; who, according to the Idea which every Man hath of God, vindicated him from such foul Imputations.

And they had a good Warrant for this from clear Reason: For if all Impurity be founded in, and proceed from Weakness and Impotency; if it all flow from Defect of Knowledge, and Shortness of Power, then there can be no Reason to affix it on him, whose Understanding and Power are both infinite. He who knows all things, and can do whatever he pleases, who is necessarily and eternally happy in himself, cannot be tempted to Wickedness. He cannot, and knows he cannot be better or worse than he is, and how is it possible then that he should be tempted? What occasion can there be of his being inordinately affected, since his Love is founded upon unerring Knowledge? And,

2. For the same Reasons must we attribute Love and Good-will to God: for as doing good to any, argues a greater Power, than doing evil; that is, to give and preserve Being, is a Work of greater Power than to destroy: so the Principles of these Actions, that is, Love and Good-will, argue more of Power than their Opposites, Hatred and Malice.

And if we will use Testimony for an Argument in this case, we shall find the Heathens in their *Idea's* of God, very unanimously attributing Goodness to him. However they did differ in the other parts of their Description, they agree in this, that God was Good.

And as their Opinion was ground on good Reason, so it is consonant to Scripture, which describes God to be Love, makes this one of the Names of God, and never did Name better express the Nature of any thing, than Love doth the Nature of God.

And to conclude ; this Scripture sets forth God as our Patern in this also, *Luke 6. 36. Be ye therefore merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful.*

Thus then if Love and Purity be divine Perfections, if by these we are made like to God, they are undoubtedly a very principal part of Religion, the Design of which is to make us Partakers of the Divine Nature, to make Man as like God as he can be.

III. These two are highly honourable to God. They make a worthy and becoming Representation of the Divine Excellencies. For when we see a Man that converses in the World, preserve himself from its Pollutions, so as he keeps a moderate Affection to all things in it, and all the Glory of it cannot tempt him to behave himself unworthily to God, we must conclude, that he meets with that in God, which satisfies his Desires, encourages his Hope, and entertains his Delights much more than the World can.

This gives other Men occasion to think how much better God is than all things else, and to prefer him before the whole World.

Again ; As to the other Particular, *Love* ; there's nothing that gives such a Lustre to our Conversation, that makes our Works so shine before Men, whereby they glorify our Father which is in Heaven ; as this, When

When Men feel themselves advantaged by any, it's natural for them in their Thoughts to run from the more immediate, to the remoter and first Cause and Original of all Good: 2 Cor. 9. 11, 12, 13. Their Thanks do not terminate on the second Causes, but are extended to God.

Thus I have shown these are honourable; but I have also said, they are highly honourable to God, they are not so in a low Degree, not ordinarily. For,

1. They are more real and certain. And,
2. More difficult Acknowledgments of God than most others; very many are only verbal Professions, the labour of the Lips, the expence of a little time, which would otherwise lie on our Hands, the Effects of Custom, the Reminders of a pious Education, the Force of Example; such may Prayer, and the Reading and Hearing God's Word be: but to keep our selves undefiled by the World; and to be kindly affectioned towards other Men, these are Works that certainly argue us to be really religious; if in these things we serve God, we are no Hypocrites; so that there is more of Reality and Certainty in these than in others.

Hence it is, that those who judge of Religion truly, account that it consists more in Charity and Purity, than in multitudes of Devotions, and frequent Addresses to God; because the one may be verbal only, and the Result of Melancholy Temper, whereas the other is more real.

When we are charitable and pure, we are religious indeed and in truth; but when we perform the other Offices only, we may be
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so but in Word and Tongue.

2. These are more difficult Acknowledgements of God than the other. Hence is it so many, who in Words by Prayers and Professions seem to own God, yet in these Works deny him: that is, their Worldly-mindedness, their Pride, their Sensuality, their Niggardliness, their Extortions, Oppression, Uncharitableness, give their Devotions the Lie; their Prayers and Lives are contrary to each other.

There are very many in the World of this Number, who are devout, but covetous, but malicious; they worship God twice every Day, and one Day every Week; but *Mammon* is adored by them in their whole Life, or else they bow down to their own Image, or serve Malice and Spite.

Now the Reason of this, is, That tho they have some Desire to be religious, yet not sufficient; they have so much as to make them do what's easie, and consistent with their Service of the Flesh and the World, but not so much as will make them chuse God for their Sovereign Lord and Master.

They can easily give one or two Hours, or more (if their worldly Occasions dispense with them) to Prayer and Reading; but to part with their Goods to relieve the Poor, to preserve their Minds and Hearts from Pride, and Lust, and Covetousness, this will cost more Time and Pains, this is to grapple with more and greater Difficulties and Temptations.

To mortifie the Members which are on the Earth, Fornication, Uncleaness, and Pride, and Covetousness, which is Idolatry; this is

a Work that requires Time and Pains, great Affiduity and Constancy, Watchfulness and Care.

From this it appears that Love and Purity are the best, beause the most real and difficult Acknowledgments of God. The charitable Man doth not serve God with that which cost him naught; for the pure and spiritual Man without Heart and Spirit, as the Man that only prays doth.

IV. These are Things hugely acceptable and pleasing to God. He that loves his own good Being, and is infinitely delighted with the glorious Perfections of his own excellent Nature, must also be pleased with so great an Assimilation, and so near a Conformity to it, as Purity and Charity are.

Where Men keep themselves pure and spotless from the World, and are fervent in an Universal Charity, they are as like God as Men can be; and he that loves himself, must also love those that are so like to him. Besides, he is pleased with his own Will, and therefore must also be pleased with such Instances of Subjection to it as these are.

Certainly every one that hath right Apprehensions of Good and Evil, that's affected to what's Good, as he ought to be, must be greatly delighted to behold a Heart flaming out in Charity, and giving out all the Expressions of Love, that his Power and opportunity will enable him to.

How pleasant a sight is it, to see a Man intent on doing all good Offices, on relieving the Indigent, on counselling the doubtful, on serving
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the necessities of all other Men with the best of his Power and Skill ! This Man hath a truly Divine and God-like Will, and is an Object very amiable and delightful.

And no less amiable is he, who preserves himself from all Contagion of the things of this Earth ; who when he sees all the Kingdoms of this World, and the Glory of them is represented to him, as it was to his Saviour, yet he is not dazled by it, nor made to leave the Ways of Righteousness, or behave himself unworthily towards his God, or his Brethren.

How glorious a Spectacle is he to God, as well as to Angels and Men, who grapples with, and encounters all the Dangers and Difficulties, all the Sollicitations and Examples of the Men and Things of this World, and overcomes them ? What triumphant Shouts and Praises must we imagine in Heaven at such a Victory ? and God himself will say of such an one, as he said of *Job* to Satan ; *Job* 2.3. *Hast thou considered my Servant Job, that there is none like him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright Man ? &c.*

He seems to upbraid the Tempter, that he could not prevail against him.

It is certainly admirable to behold, and an Object worthy of the Love of God, a Man grappling with Flesh and Blood, and with the various Oppositions this World gives him, and overcoming all.

V. These two are consistent with, dependant on, and inseparable from the other Acknowledged Parts of Religion.

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VWhen I say they are consistent with, and dependant on, &c. I shew they are Religion; when I add that they are inseparable, I shew they are necessary and principal.

1. Consistent. This is absolutely necessary to make any thing a part of Religion, that it consent with the rest; for it's unconceivable, that God should be the Author of a Religion that's made up of Contradictions; every part of that Religion that comes from him, must cohere and consist with the rest. If there be a Religion that's thwart and opposite to it self, it is not the Religion that the wise God was the Author of, but 'tis the Product of Man's Folly. So that whatsoever it be that pretends to be Religion, and consents not with, but is repugnant to that which is confessedly so, that's a Mistake, that's not Religion.

And this Consideration may be of great use to Men, who have many Things obtruded on them under the Notion of Religion, that are indeed diametrically opposite to it.

How many Obligations do Men lay on themselves, and are laid on them by others, that are directly contrary to that first and universal Precept of doing good?

Are there not Articles of Faith made, by those that think they have Power of composing them, that are perfectly repugnant? *e. g.* That God is good, and yet more cruel than the worst Tyrant on Earth. And Faith and Obedience, which should conspire and assist each other mutually, are made to clash and hinder each other in the Religion that some Men teach; for all Men are commanded to love
God

God with all their Heart, &c. and yet the Religion of some represents them so, as it's impossible for Man to love him, I will not, tho I could run out into many Particulars.

This that I have said may be sufficient to awaken our Thoughts so much as to examine, whether there be any Inconsistencies in that which we own as our Religion, and to secure us from being so grossly impos'd on for the future, as to admit any thing under the pretence of Religion, that is repugnant to that which is unquestionably true. VVere this one Rule but carefully attended to, it would preserve us from vain and impossible Attempts, and distracted Thoughts and Trouble, and abundance of Mischiefs that attend on Contradictions. And for this Reason I have insisted thus long on this matter.

I think I need not shew, that both Charity and Purity are not in the least inconsistent with any unquestionable part of Religion. I am sure Love to God doth not oppose nor hinder Love to Man; nor yet doth Love to himself, so far as it is, reasonable and religious, bar him from loving others.

Those Enjoiments that are moderate, and natural and lawful, are no Obstructions to our Compassion towards the Miserable; we shall rather by our Pleasures (if they lay within those Bounds) be disposed to Pity, and enabled to relieve.

And there can be no Shew of Repugnance betwixt Purity and Religion; for tho we be obliged to acting, and to diligence in it, yet we may be, notwithstanding that, as pure, nay we shall

shall be more pure than *Recluses* and *Monasticks*, whose Imaginations may do more to entangle their Affections, than the presence of Things themselves.

But this is not all I have to say on the behalf of these two, for this only proves that they ought not to be excluded from Religion on this Account, that they are repugnant to any parts of it, for they are not.

I now proceed to shew that they depend on, and inseparably follow that of Religion which is unquestionable; and also that other parts of Religion depend on, and derive from them. Of the first Sort are Love to God, Faith and Hope in him: Of the second, Justice and Honesty in our Dealings, and Alms and Hospitality.

He that loves God, must love his Creature, his Image; and he must love him also, because God doth.

Again; If the Love of God dwell in the Heart, it will exclude all inordinate Love to the World, and other things, which is only there where the Love of God is not: it's the Want of that which makes us so dote on this; as 'tis because the Light of the Sun is gone, that makes a Candle, or the Moon and Stars so much taken notice of. And if we have that Faith which is the Evidence of things not seen, which sets before us the Glory and Misery of the future State, and assures us of the great Reward of those that order their Conversation aright, it will make the things of this World to appear much less, than they did whilst we saw no greater or better. And so we shall neither be
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defiled by an immoderate Affection to them, nor be sparing and niggardly in our Communications. And if we believe and hope for the Happiness of Heaven, we shall not seek for it in the Abundance of earthly Possessions, but shall take our Saviour's Advice, and make our selves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness, &c. Whosoever lives by this Faith, and in whose Heart the Hope of everlasting Happiness is, it will make him *purifie himself as God is pure*, 1 John 3. 3. It must have this Effect on him, to fortifie him against all low Desires, and immoderate Appetites after the things of this Earth. He whose Affections are set on things above, will not have them set on things below. Ambition and Sensuality, and Thirst after Riches, shall never be able to possess themselves of that Soul, where the Love of God, and Hopes of Heaven dwell.

To conclude this then; unless Man can love one Good, and not love another that's like it; unless he can love a Thing and not desire it; admire a Perfection, and not seek it; unless he can love that most, which is, and which he knows to be less Good: Purity and Charity are inseparable from Love to God, from Faith and Hope in him.

How vain therefore are their Pretences, who would be thought to believe in God, and to have a vigorous and strong Hope in him, tho they be covetous or proud, tho they be intemperate or unchaste? And how greatly are they deceived themselves, or would abuse others, who would make a Shew of Love to God, whilst they dearly love this World; and do
not

not love his Creatures, his Servants and Children, and those in whom is most of the Image of God seen?

Again ; Other parts of Religion derive and flow from these two : We cannot be just and honest in our dealings, unless we have subdued all inordinate affections to the World ; if our minds be not pure, neither will our actions be so ; as is the Fountain, so are the Streams. If there be Adulteries, Fornications, Covetousness within ; they will as they defile the Soul, so also pollute the outward man ; they will betray themselves in the outward acts of Injustice, and the commission of those other Wickednesses.

Almsgiving, when it is a work of Religion, and not of Pride, it proceeds from a tender compassion of the misery of others, and a just value of the things of this World.

Hospitality, besides that it argues a right understanding, that the things of this World are to serve the uses of Men, and that they are not to be appropriated to a few only ; so it flows also from a principle of free, and generous, and universal Love, a Love to Mankind.

I will conclude this Particular with one instance more. Prayer to God is an undoubted piece of Religion, that is a very great acknowledgment of the Power, and Goodness, and Truth of God. Now whoever makes supplications to God, as he hath been taught by his Saviour, the first and most of his desires are, that God may be glorified, that his Will may be submitted to, and when he prays for the things of

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this Life, as 'tis put after God's Honour, and with submission to his Will ; so his desires are very modest, for he asks either onely the necessary supports of Life, or at most the moderate conveniences of it.

Now no Man can do thus, whose heart is defiled with inordinate Love to the things of this Body and State ; so that unless he keep himself unspotted, he cannot pray as Christ hath taught him. And 'tis a plain case, that he who is not so Charitable as to forgive Enemies, cannot Pray as he ought. How can any say, *Forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us*, who doth not from his heart forgive his Enemies and those that have offended him ? Especially since our Saviour hath said, *Except ye, &c.*

Thus we see how necessary prerequisites these two are to Prayer, that is as it ought to be, and that will be accepted of God. I proceed to the

6. That the opposites of these are destructive of all true Religion, and destroyed by it. It's a very good Argument, that these are parts of Religion, if their opposites be also opposites to Religion. Now that impurity or over-great Love of this World, and Uncharitableness, or too little Love to Men, are opposite to, and destructive of true Religion, will appear to any one that considers.

He that cannot discern the contrariety of these, hath neither Sense nor Reason, nor Experience left him ; for there's nothing in the World more contrary ; sooner may Heat and Cold, Light and Darkness, the greatest contradictions

traditions in Nature be reconciled, than Religion and Impurity; than a just regard to God, and none to Men.

For the eviſtion of this, I appeal to every Man's ſenſe: He that hath any ſenſe of Religion, and takes notice how that increaſes or declines in his Soul, when he is more, and when leſs Religious; he cannot but obſerve, that the more his Thoughts and Deſires are carried out to this World, the leſs to the other; the more affection he hath for the World, the leſs for God: And on the contrary, the more really Religious, the leſs under the power of low, brutiſh and mundane affections; the more ſenſe of God, the leſs regard of the World; the more vigorous and lively his hopes are of future happineſs, the leſs eager and importunate is he in purſuit of preſent enjoyments; he can be very indifferent to, and much unconcerned in the happineſs of this World, who lives in the certain joyful expectation of another, that's complete and eternal in the future Life.

And for the other, Uncharitableneſs, he hath been very inobſervant of himſelf, and the Life of Religion in his Soul, who is not very ſenſible, that as he increaſes in Love to God, ſo he doth in Love to Men too: It is with him as it was with *David*, he ſtudies *what he ſhall render to the Lord*, &c. and when he finds that his goodneſs extends not to God, he lets it out to his Children and Creatures. He darts up his Love to Heaven, but there being no need of it, it returns in ſhowers of Bleſſing on the Inhabitants of this Earth: The more he finds of Love to God, the more he feels himſelf conſtrained to love Men,

and the less, and more remiss, and cold his affection to Men, the less intense to God.

In short, there is no Man who hath not been wholly regardless of himself, and careless of Religion, but he is abundantly convinced, that as Impurity and Uncharitableness grow and advance in him, the Sense of God and Spiritual concerns decreases and declines; these eat all Religious sense out of the Soul, as a Canker, and consume it like a Moth.

Or 2^{dly}. Our observation of others will furnish us with Argument sufficient to evince this, Where men are immoderately affected to the World, and are without a just affection to their Brethren, we may observe them to be,

1. Hypocrites in Religion. And
2. To break out into open professed Wickedness.

They at first for a time draw near to God, but 'tis with their Lips only, whilst their Hearts are after their Covetousness: They bow down to God with their Bodies, and give him the Services of their Lips, whilst with their Souls they fall down to *Mammon*; they call God Master, whilst they serve their Lusts.

Nor do they alway continue thus dividing themselves betwixt God and the World, and hovering betwixt Heaven and Earth; but at last they are tired with this Hypocrisy; when the World hath got a full Victory over the sense of God in their Souls, then they fly out into open Prophaneness.

How often do we see it, that Men, after a great and long struggling betwixt a Religious Sense and Impurity, have at last given over all

acknowledgment of God, and set themselves to work Wickedness? They knew that if they regarded Iniquity in their Hearts, God would not hear their Prayers, and then it was to no purpose for them to make them.

Men will not go first and be reconciled to their Brother, before they pray for Reconciliation with God; and they know that this is to no purpose without the other; and hence it is, that too frequently they quit Praying.

And is it not reasonable to expect, that they who hate Men, should in time hate God also? They that will not cherish the little beginnings of Goodness where-ever they see them, neither would they acknowledg and adore the Infinite Goodness of God, if it was in their power to destroy it: They that will not blow up small sparks, would put out the Fire whence they come, if they could.

But that which I have said falls under every mans Observation, that they who are impure, give God either none, or an Hypocritical Worship; and they who are uncharitable to Men, have not the Love of God in them; and in time they will go on to farther Impiety, to open Wickedness, will appear as they are.

3. Scripture is every where opposing these to one another. *1 John 2. 15. Love not the World,* that is, with that immoderate inordinate Love, *for if any man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him.* They are so perfectly contrary, that they cannot consist in the same subject. *Col. 3. 2, 5, 6, 7.* Idolatry is very contrary to true Religion, and destructive of it: for whilst

Men pretend in that way to worship God, they are laying the foundation of Atheism and Irreligion; for so they do when they give Divine Worship to that which is not God; seeing whatever corporeal representation is made of God, must imply those imperfections, which if attributed to him, makes him no God.

Hence is it that God hath so much declared himself against all Images, and such Idolatrous Worship. Now Covetousness is Idolatry; Men give Worship to that which is not God, and he that doth this, sets up a Competitor, an opposite, so as the Scripture saith expressly, *he cannot serve God*, Matth. 6. 24.

And in many places God respects the services of them who were Oppressors, Unjust and Uncharitable, *Isa. 1. 58.* He makes no account of them: Sacrificing was but as the cutting off a Dog's head; and Prayers, where impure, unholly hands are lifted up, are but howlings, as the Prophet calls them.

I add but one place more, to shew that Religion is destructive of these, *1 Pet. 1. 22. Seeing ye have purified your Souls, in obeying the Truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned Love of the Brethren, &c.*

4ly. Let any Man consider the things themselves, and he will discover a perfect opposition; they are contrary in their very Natures, they are contrary in their Effects and Tendencies.

Religion gives the greatest Love and Honour to God; it preserves a lively sense of him, and our obligations to him on the Soul: The Man
that

that is Religious, lives in a due acknowledgment of the Divine Perfections, and carries himself becomingly towards him ; whereas the impure Man, he whose Soul is polluted by inordinate Love to this World, hath the sense of God quite extinguish'd in his Soul ; God is not in all his Thoughts, he is so immerst into Sensuality and Brutishness ; or so sunk into earthly-mindedness, that he cannot raise his mind aloft, and ascend up to Heaven in Divine Contemplations: He hath placed his Treasure on Earth, and his Heart is and will be there ; it's shut up in a Dungeon, that there are no communications betwixt it and Heaven ; it's fetter'd and clog'd by brutish and little low appetites, that the poor Slave cannot stir from his Oar.

The Design of Religion is to rescue the mind of Man into a liberty from those vile and dishonorable affections, that so it may converse with those objects that are most proper, and do those works that are most natural to it.

But the tendency of Impurity is more and more to engage the Soul in such desires, and to immerse and sink it still deeper, till it be drown'd in Destruction, till it be swallow'd up in the bottomless Abyss of Sin and Unreasonableness.

And for Uncharitableness, how must it needs disable and indispose Man for making Addresses to God ? How can he love and adore God for that Goodness which himself neither hath nor desires ? How can he seek Pardon of Sin, and supplies of his wants, who himself is bent upon Revenge, and will not relieve his Brother ?

He that seeks forgiveness of God, how can

he be averſe from forgiving his Brother? And therefore he in the Goſpel, whom his Maſter forgave a great Debt, and he would not forgive his Brother a ſmall one, did that of which he could give no account, and received a ſevere but juſt Doom.

It's certainly writ in every Man's Heart, that as he doth, it ſhall be done to him; by the ſame meaſure he meaſures others, he ſhall be meaſured himſelf. From all this I argue, That theſe two are very oppoſite, to deſire that God would love him, and himſelf not love others.

By what hath been ſaid, I think ſufficiently appears the oppoſition betwixt Religion, and Impurity and Uncharitableneſs; which I have the rather inſiſted on thus long, that I might diſcover the deluſion of ſo many, who impoſe upon themſelves and others, thinking they are truly Religious, whiſt their hearts are fill'd with Covetous Deſires, and Ambitious Thoughts, and Senſuality reigns in them: They account themſelves Religious, whiſt they are fill'd with all bitterneſs of Malice and Anger, or have no inclination to do good to any but themſelves; that is, though they do not Hate, they do not Love; though they are not Malicious, they are Uncharitable.

But theſe pretences are vain, theſe Men would reconcile Good and Evil, God and Satan, they would bring Heaven and Hell together; they do indeed go about this, whiſt they would be and ſeem Religious, though they are Impure and Uncharitable.

*Let no Man deceive himſelf, God will not be mock-
ed; if we be Proud and Haughty, if Senſual,
that*

that is, Intemperate and Unchast ; if Earthly-minded and Lovers of Money ; if we do not love Men, and be not compassionate to the miserable, we are not in his account Religious, whatever we may conceit of our selves, we are in a state opposite to Religion, that teaches us to give God and Spiritual things the chief of our affections.

In a truly Religious Soul God is enthroned, and Spiritual Interests have the preference above all others ; here 'tis quite contrary, they love Pleasures, or Honours, or Riches more than God, and every Trifle is preferred before the greatest Concerns of the Soul.

7. *Charity* and *Purity* are intrinsically and eminently good, and matters of Liberty, and therefore principal parts of Religion.

When I say they are matters of Liberty, I require this as necessary to make any action Religious ; and I understand by matters of Liberty, those actions which are consequent on the determination of our Will, which either directly or indirectly, mediately or immediately, (as the Schools distinguish) are under the power of the Will, are subject to it.

Now this is a necessary ingredient to a Religious Action ; for whatsoever is not voluntary and free, that's necessary ; and that which is so, is neither capable of commendation nor dispraise ; it is neither Vertue nor Vice ; it ought not to be Rewarded, neither can Punishment be justly inflicted for it.

Whence by the by we may observe, what an effectual course the assertors of Necessity, and
oppo-

opposers of Liberty take, at once to undermine and destroy Religion : for if all were necessary, there could be neither Religion nor Sin ; if Men did unavoidably what they do, where is place left for Reward ? Or what colour could there be for punishing that which cannot be helped ? Wherefore should any suffer for doing, or not doing, that which he cannot but do, or not do ?

On this very account it is, that in this lower World, Man is only accounted the subject of Religion, because Man only hath Reason and Liberty ; this is that which differences him from all inferior Animals, and this is the very foundation of his being Religious.

No Action can be Religious, but as 'tis capable of Reason and Liberty ; so far as it partakes of these, so far and no farther may it be Religious or Wicked ; This then is the reason why Man is the only Religious Animal, because he is the only Animal that partakes of Reason and Liberty.

I shall only make this Reflection by the by, on what I have said ; the more rational and voluntary our Religious Actions are, the better they are, the more of Religion they have in them.

Where Men act from Ignorance and Force, they do not act Religiously. 'Tis Reason or Knowledge, and Liberty of choice in the Habit or Principle, that is requisite to make Man a subject capable of Religion ; and 'tis actual Knowledge or Reason, and the use of Liberty, which makes a Man actually Religious.

Thus

Thus then I have shewn, That whosoever can be Religious, must be a voluntary Agent; and whatsoever is Religion, must partake of Liberty. No Action that falls not under the determination of the Will, can be call'd morally good or bad.

Now that *Charity* and *Purity* are no necessary Emanations from Humane Nature, but dependent on the more contingent, uncertain choice of his Will, is evident to every ones sense and observation: if these things were more natural, and less voluntary, they would be more frequent than we find they are.

This therefore being granted, I now proceed to the other part of the Proposition, wherein I have two things to do.

1. To shew that what is Good, supposing it a matter of Liberty, is a part of Religion, and what is greatly good is a principal part of Religion. And,

2. That these two are eminently good.

1. To be Religious, and to do well, are but the same thing under a different notion; for to be Religious, is to have a due regard to God; and doing well, is the best expression of a regard to God, that Man can make. No Man hath a regard to God, that doth not live well; and no man either doth, or did, or can live well, without a due regard to God.

Religion, as I have already discoursed, engages Men to obey and imitate, to please and honour God; therefore the actions it engages to,

to, must be of themselves good; for God can command none other; what he requires must be good, and it is as certain that what he does must be good; and therefore there's no imitation of God by works of Wickedness. In vain do they pretend they are like God, who do Evil: Nor can any actions please him but good ones; whatever he loves is certainly good, and no actions are properly and naturally honourable to God, but such as are in themselves good, others may be so occasionally and by accident.

I proceed to argue this otherwise. Religion obliges men to do no Evil, and to omit no Good; and therefore whatsoever is Good, must be accounted matter of Religion, and to fall within its compass.

Religion is no narrow confined thing; 'tis not kept within the limits of a Church or a Closet; nor is it determin'd to a time, one or more days in seven, to bow down the Head for a day; nor is it kept in the compass of some few Exercises, such as Praying, and Reading, and Hearing, and serious Pondering; but it extends it self by a kind of Omnipresence to all times and places in which we are; to all persons and things, and actions with which we converse. It's both in the Shop, and the Market, in the House, and the Field, in Business and Relaxations, in Publick as well as Private; not only in Devotions, but in our very Divertisements and Entertainments of our selves; it is on the Working as well as the Resting and Holy-days. It regulates our Mirth as well as Sorrow, and directs and moderates our Eating and Drinking

ing as well as our Fastings and Mournings.

It doth not onely appear when we make our Addresses to God immediately ; but in our converse with men. As in God we live and move, &c. so in Religion ; for that is an imitation of God.

And in short, True Religion is unlimited and unbounded, as the God it adores ; and it puts us on doing good universally to all Men, in all places, and at all times ; and when it is once come to this, Religion hath had its desired work, and is arrived at the end it aims at ; for that and none other is the design and intent of all true Religion, to make Men do Good. Indeed it can aim at nothing else ; for how can it be supposed that it should oblige us to evil actions, whereby we cannot possibly express our regard to God ; because we disobey his Commands in doing Evil, since they are all good ; and we make our selves unlike him, he is, and doth Good, and we act in contrariety to him when we do Evil, we also do that which is very dishonorable and displeasing to him.

The sum is, That Religion obliges us to all that's Good, to nothing else ; and according as any Actions are more eminently, necessarily good, it lays greater obligations on us to them.

I have the longer insisted on this, because I would remove the Mistakes of some Men, who make Religion and doing Good, to be contrary to each other : I would clear Religion from all such Aspersions that are cast upon it, and so take away the Enmity that Men have against it.

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Some have entertain'd such an Opinion of it, as if it made Men worse, than without it they would be ; and I wish there were not too much ground for this Calumny ; for 'tis too true, That the Religion of some Men hath made them not only affectedly singular, morose and humorsome, less affable, and more conceited of themselves, censuring and despising others : But hath engaged them likewise to Lying and Falseness, to Bloody Massacres, and Inhumane Cruelties toward those that but differed from them in some trifling Opinions.

Nay, and to shew, That even all sorts of Wickedness have come from mistaken Religion : Some men have upon Religious Accounts run into all Excess of Riot and Intemperance, and have pleaded from thence for a Liberty for themselves to be Sensual : Other Men not so Religious, had not the Priviledg to commit Adulteries, and to indulge themselves in such Corporeal Gratifications ; No, these were the Prerogatives of such Saints and Perfectionists as themselves. *Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum.*

But let all such know, That 'tis their own False Perswasions and Inordinate Lusts, that engage them to such Practices ; they are Proud and Peevish, and cannot bear with those that dissent from them in some smaller matters ; and this ill Temper they Baptize with the name of Zeal for the Truth of God, and Cause of Religion ; whereas 'tis nothing but an Impotent desire of imposing their Opinions on others ; and a great deal of Pride that makes them

them angry if their Authority be not submitted to. But let these, and all that by such Mistakes render Religion so odious, and affright others from entertaining it, know, that to be religious, and to do good are the same thing : they that think otherwise, they know not what Religion is. They that do evil on a religious account, their Religion is Irreligion, they establish Wickedness by a Law.

What greater Affront can be offered to the Majesty of Heaven, than to make his Authority the Warrant to practise Wickedness ? to do Evil out of regard to God, and for his Glory ?

To conclude this Particular: Whensoever we will express our regard to God, let it be in doing good : and this may be a very good Direction to us in these Days, when Men come to us *in Nomine Domini*, and impose many things on us upon the account of Religion, to examine, whether those Actions they would engage us to, be in themselves good or evil : For this I look on as certainly true, that according to the real inward Goodness of an Action, is the greater or less Obligation to it from Religion ; so that if any Action be greatly and conspicuously good, our Religion lays strong Obligations on us to do it ; if it be evil, according as that is more or less, it restrains us from it : if it be in a less degree good or evil, we are less obliged to do, or not to do it ; but where the Good or Evil of it is very obscure, uncertain and disputable, there the Obligation is so too. By this Direction we may secure our selves from being so grossly imposed on,

on, as to do Evil on a Religious Account.

And now I proceed to shew ;

2^{dly}, That Purity and Charity are good in themselves, and that they are so in an high degree. And,

1. I would shew, that they are good to Man singly considered, and by himself.

2. To Societies of Men, to Man with others.

They are good to Men in this present State, they are good in reference to the future.

1. They are suitable to his Nature and Circumstances.

2. They are greatly perfective of Human Nature.

3. They are full of Pleasure and Delight.

4. They are truly honourable, and give a Reputation and Esteem : So that if that which is honest and becoming, if that which is pleasant and delightful, if that which is beneficial and advantageous, be good, then these are greatly so. And in reference to Society,

5. They lay the Foundation of all the Virtues of Conversation ; not only Justice and Faithfulness, but Comity and Affability, Candor and Urbanity, &c. And,

6. Of that Peace, without which Society is full of Danger and Trouble.

7. And as to the future Life, it prepares and fits us for the Happiness of Heaven ; it disposes us to live in that good State, where no unclean thing enters, and where they live a Life of eternal and intensest Love.

1. That

1. That Kindness and Compassion, and a Propensity to do good universally : And,

2. To be affected to the things of this World, according to the Serviceableness they have to our real Happiness, are suitable;

(1.) To Human Nature.

(2.) His Condition, or Circumstances. I will endeavour to make out particularly when I have premised, that this Suitableness or Agreeableness to Human Nature, and to its Circumstances, is that Notion which most Men have of what's good to Man. For so the Schools define Good, *Quod convenit alicui Enti, & quod convenit unicuiq; in ordine ad finem*. This is in English, that which is suitable or agreeable; and that is, when two things have so much of Likeness, or Identity and Oneness, that one Notion will serve them both; when there's nothing of Repugnancy and Contradiction in the Notion of one, to the Notion of the other, but they are together; and if the Agreeableness be very great, it seems hard to separate them, they cannot well be conceived asunder.

All the Agreeableness which I shall consider at present, is that betwixt Causes and Effects : here therefore I shall endeavour to shew, that in Human Nature there are those Faculties and Principles, which are the proper Causes of both these, Charity and Purity; and that Man's Circumstances are such, as will elicit those natural Powers into Actions that are charitable and pure; and consequently that such a State exceedingly becomes a Man.

I might also here shew, that the Effects of these two, are the Preservation of Human Nature :

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ture : but I consider this under the second Particular, where I assert, that they do not only preserve, but also advance and perfect it.

First ; For Charity. I shall first endeavour to shew the Congruity of Charity to the Nature, and Faculties, and Circumstances of Man ; and that it is the natural and proper Issue of such Principles and Causes.

This I will do in these several Particulars.

1. The Affection of Love is natural. We naturally love all good, and necessarily that which we think so to be : that is, we delight in that which is good, and desire to preserve and increase it.

2. There is actually some Good, and a Capacity of much more in every Man. No Man so corrupted, that hath not something amiable left in him. Man is not so depraved, that there is nothing to be found in him that is lovely ; and where he is worst, he is capable of being better. From these two will follow this Confectary.

3. That the reason why a Man doth not love others, is because he apprehends not the Good they have, or may have ; and the true Cause of that is want of Consideration, he thinks not of them. This by the way.

4. But because he is so near himself, that he cannot but consider, and so understand his own good, he fails not to love himself. There is no Man wholly destitute of Self-love ; indeed Self-preservation is a Principle that is natural to all Beings.

5. This

5. This Self-love, tho, occasionally and by accident, it may hinder Love to others, as it's excessive, and too much confines our Thoughts to one thing: yet the genuine and more natural Off-spring of it, is Love to others; for he that loves one Man, how can he but love another that's like him? If the Objects are alike, the Acts which are about them must be so too. He that loves one Man, (that is, himself) must also love another, because else he condemns himself, his Actions clash with each other; either let him not love himself, or let him love his Brother.

6. A natural Inclination to imitate, especially those Examples that are proposed to his very Infancy, and which his own Experience makes more effectual. Children very soon discover a Proneness to Imitation, and the Examples of Beneficence and Love are constantly before them, and their own Sense will convince them of the Good they receive from the Love of others: so that these Examples must necessarily have an advantage above others, for they cannot but take notice of them, and they must like them, and they have the first Possession of their Affections.

7. As it's natural to do good unto all, so especially to those of his own kind. This is observable even in Brutes, that they have more love to those of the same Species.

8. It's natural to do to others, as himself would be dealt with by them. This was a Principle known by Reason, unassisted by Revelation, as the Writings of the Heathen witness; and it is generally approved by all at first

first propofal, which are both great Evidences that it is natural.

Now I need not fay, that every Man would have others kind and good to him, and if he would, he muft be fo to them ; for affuredly, this is the moft probable (if not only) way to engage them to love him, if he love them. Both the force of an Example, and of the Law of Gratitude engages them.

The reafon of this Principle feems to be this, that Men think other Men like themfelves, and that they are under the fame Obligations, and that their Principles are common, and their Privileges fo too ; that one hath no Prerogative above other ; that it is but Juftice to do as we are done to : and there can be no reafon why a Man fhould expect that others fhould be kind to him, which will not alfo oblige him to be fo them. If there be any Foundation for his Expectation of good from others, there is the fame for their Expectation from him : fo that they act very unaccountably, who would have all others loving, and kind, and ferviceable to them, whereas they will not make the leaft return.

There are they that cry, Give, give, and are unfatisfied with receiving, but never think of a Requital. We count thefe Monfters in Nature, and 'tis becaufe they act contrary to thofe natural Principles ; *Si vis amari, ama ; & ab altero expectes, alteri quod feceris.*

9. It's alfo natural to Man to be innocent, not to hurt others ; as appears by the regret all Men, not greatly corrupted, have, at the Punifhment even of Malefactors, tho that be neceffary

cessary to publick Good. Men find themselves deprived of some of the Objects of their best Actions: Besides, they can very hardly keep themselves from imagining themselves in the like case.

10. It is the principal Operation of Man: For,

(1.) It's the last, and that to which all the rest refer, they are in order to it, and serve Love: even the contrary Passions do but make way for this; for Anger and Hatred it self remove Evil, and destroy that, that so nothing but Good may remain. They destroy their own Objects, which shews they are not to continue. No Man is to live in a State of Anger or Hatred; for these are but serviceable to Love, they make way for it. As *John* the Baptist went before our Saviour; he was a Man of a severe Behaviour, Fasting and Austerities; and he, saith the Scripture, *made the rough Places plain*; and then follows He who was meek, and gentle, and Love it self: Just so it is here, the fierceness of Anger, and the bitterness of Hatred, are Harbingers for the Mildness and Sweetness of Love. They persecute and destroy what's evil (that's their Design) that so they may preserve and secure the good; that is, that Love may be more freely exercised, that there be no Obstruction to it, no Obstacle in its way, no Interruption of it.

Besides, Knowledge and Understanding refer to, and serve Love: our Knowledge informs and directs Love, that's it's last end; it shews what's good, and how it's to be preserved and

increased; and all this that we may love, that is, do good and delight in it; and all the inferiour Faculties are but the Servants and Instruments of Love.

(2.) It's the most pleasant Operation of Man; no Action he doth is accompanied with so much Delight and Satisfaction, none that hath so much of Pleasure and Complacency attending it: it's that indeed which makes all the rest pleasant, and it self is the greatest Pleasure of which Man is capable. He is never so ravished with Delight, as when his Thoughts are full of present good; nor hath Man ever so pure and unmixed a Joy, as when he is on the design of doing Good, in such Undertakings there's nothing of Regret after, or Anxiety before.

Indeed we are beholden to Love, for all the Pleasure we have, it is a principal Ingredient in every Satisfaction that Man hath. And this is a further Argument that Love is the last Operation, because it hath so much of Pleasure in it, which is the Crown and Consummation of our Actions, and is a certain Argument that a Work is natural, if it be constantly pleasant, and attended with Delight.

(3.) It's the principal; for Love is the ruling, governing Affection, it rules and sways the Scepter amongst all the Powers of Man; it gives Laws to our Understanding, as well as our Inferiour Powers. Our Affection to good determines us to think, and speak, and act: therefore we do or do not such Actions, because we think them good or not; that is, we do or do not love them.

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By these three Particulars I have endeavoured to shew, that Love is very considerable, and indeed the principal Operation of Man.

I need not now add, that Love to Man, or Charity, is one of our most perfect Acts, because Man is one of the best Objects in the World: he either is best, or capable of being best of all things in this inferior World.

And then the Perfections of Men are most proper Objects of our Love, because they are most imitable by us. Therefore God himself chose to converse with us in our Nature, because the Perfections of God, as they discovered themselves in Humanity, were a far more suitable and congruous Object for our Love, as being nearer us, and liker our own, and more attainable by us, than in the Deity it self, barely considered.

The sum of these Considerations is, That to love, that is, to delight in Good, and to desire to preserve and increase it, this is a natural Affection, a part of our very Nature: and the Operations of this Faculty, are the principal and chief, those which are most pleasant, to which all the rest refer, and are subject. That we know of more Good in Man, and more Capacity of Good, than in any besides God.

Again, every Man is naturally endued with Self-love; and he cannot therefore but love his Like. He is also inclined naturally to imitate those Examples that are set before him early, as the Examples of Kindness and Love are by his Parents, and those that have the Care of his first Education. It's also agreeable to Nature to do good Offices to those of his

own kind, and to be innocent and harmless; and therefore, those Passions which dispose Men to hurt others, cause unnatural and violent Motions in the Blood, and such as are really prejudicial to, not only the Quiet of his Mind, but the Health of his Body, who is acted by them.

No Man that hurts another, but begins with himself; he first offers Violence to his own Nature, before he destroys another's.

And lastly, It's natural to do to others, as himself would be done to by them: and indeed no Man can reasonably expect other dealing than he gives; and therefore is it the Scripture saith so often, *With the same measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again*; and represents God dealing with us, as we deal with others: *Psal. 18. 25, 26.* And the Parable of the Servant, that would not forgive his Brother a little Debt, &c. *And if ye forgive Men their Trespases, &c.* In short, a Man may expect that both God and Men will be to him as he is to others.

And from these Particulars, I hope it is sufficiently clear, that to love other Men is agreeable to our Nature, in that it is the proper and suitable Effect of those Powers and Principles that are natural to us.

I will now show briefly, that it is also agreeable to the Condition and Circumstances in which every Man, and especially a Christian, is.

Man is in himself so indigent and necessitous, and lives so much, so wholly upon Alms and Benevolence, that this State of his will necessarily

farily ingage him to do good and be kind to others ; he depends so much on the Supplies of others, that he cannot subsist without them ; the Communications of those that are above him, and the Services of those below him, gave him his Being at first, and still maintain him in it ; had it not been for their bounteous Goodness, he had never been ; and were it not for that, and for the continued Ministry of his Fellow-Creatures, he would cease to be.

And surely no Man can think of his Original, and how he was born, and with what Care and Tendernefs he was handled, when he was brought into the World, a little, poor, impotent, helpless Infant : He can never consider the Affection of his Mother, and the Love and Pains of his Nurse, the Provision that his Father made for a supply of his present and future Wants ; the Advantage he received from his Instructors communicating Knowledg to him, and the many numberless Benefits he hath received from the Good-will and the Communicativeness of his Friends and Neighbours, and those he hath conversed with ; but he must be constrained to make Returns, and to do to others, as himself hath been done to. Now that others have lighted his Candle by their Light, he cannot think it reasonable to put it under a Bushel, but to set it on a Candlestick, that it may give Light. What he is and hath, he hath received, and shall he not give ? He hath been liberally dealt with, and shall he be niggardly to others ? He owes himself, and all the Good in him to Love, and shall he not love ?

love ? How can he be Malicious and Spiteful, that hath Received, and Owes so much to Love and Good-Will, who had never been, if it had not been for that, and who could not continue many moments without it ?

Or how can Man shut up himself within himself, rowl himself up like a Hedg-hog, and turn his Bristles out to all others ? How can he do this, who considers the World, and sees that the Universe it self subsists by reciprocation of Motions ; and there's nothing that receives, but makes returns ; If all the Rivers run into the Sea, the Sea sends supplies to those Fountains that feed the Rivers ; or if any thing lose its own Substance by Communication, yet it's found in something else ; and by such mutations the World continues.

Now shall Man alone run Counter to the rest of Beings, shall he center in himself alone ? shall he be like the unsatisfied Grave, that receives and keeps Dead Bodies, and still cries, Give, is never fill'd ?

But why should he be thus that is shortly to Die ? that is, let him be as careful of himself, and regardless of others as he will ; let him lay up never so great Treasures for himself, and lay out nothing for the relief of others ; yet all this Care and Store shall not make him live away, no, nor lengthen his Life out a moment longer : Why should not he rather communicate and do Good, especially since that is the proper use of all the things of this World ? they were designed to be used, and not to be hidden and hoarded.

But if we further consider Man as a Christian,

stian, as living under the Gospel-Dispensation, there is so exact a futableness of Love and Charity to that, as nothing can be more; in-somuch that it's a Wonder that any Man who owns himself a Christian, can be Uncharitable; for every Christian knows he and all Men are Sinners against God, and obnoxious to just Punishment, and yet that God hath not taken advantage against him: He is long-suffering, notwithstanding Man's horrible Wickedness, his unreasonable, unaccountable violation of his good Laws, yet he spares him, and waits to be Gracious; and when Man had made himself impotent and unable for his own Recovery, God makes Provision: He so loved the World, the sinful, foolish, provoking World, that he gave a free Donation indeed as ever was; when nothing less would be sufficient, his Only Begotten Son, the Eternal Word, came and took Humane Nature into Union with himself; and that Man, so united to God, acted and suffer'd, liv'd and died, out of great Love to the poor, sinful, miserable Sons of Men; and he hath made way for their Present and Future greatest Happiness.

Now, who can believe and consider this, and not have his Heart made to burn within him? Hath God and my Saviour loved me so much, saith the good Christian, and shall not I love others? Hath he loved all, and shall I love my self only? Hath he loved, and shall I hate, and bear Malice? Is my Debt of Thousands forgiven, and shall not I forgive my Fellow-Servants of a few Pence? Doth the great God pass by those Faults which he might justly

justly punish, and shall not I pardon those small Offences against me, which were I not partial to my self, and sway'd by Passion and Folly, would be none at all? Or if they be as real and great as they seem to my mistake, I ought not to punish them.

Do I hope that God will overlook Thousands of Miscarriages in me his Subject; and will I be severe to my equal for every Peccadillo? Or can I believe that the Compassions of God are toward me in my Sicknes; and will I be without Pity to those that languish under Diseases? Can I hope for Pity, and not shew it? Or, do I think that God compassionates the Miseries, and pardons the Offences of others; and can I be cruel and merciless to them?

Lastly, Can I believe that the Infinite Love of God hath resolved to give Eternal Life and Happiness to me? and can I be so stingy and niggardly, as to think much at the bestowing any earthly thing on others? Am I so well provided, and yet grudge to give a little out of my abundance, for the Relief of others?

Say if it be not highly reasonable, to expect that he who makes this Profession of his Faith and Hope in the goodness of God, for the Pardon of his Sin, and his Future and Eternal Glory, should also himself love others, as one that's overcome with Love himself, that owes all he hath and hopes for to it: that would either not have been, or been miserable without it?

Shall not the person who hath this great Love of God shed abroad in his heart, be constrained to love other Men? For assuredly, if
God

God so loved us, we ought also to love one another ; it's the reasonablest, clearest consequence that can be made. So much also for the Circumstances.

Man is naturally Communicative ; and therefore naturally apt to do good : Speech is the great Instrument of Communication, and he naturally speaks Truth ; and that's the greatest good that one Man can do another, to communicate Truth to him.

Man can do more good to Man than to any other Being ; and therefore there's an opportunity which elicits Love into Act.

Hatred and Anger do not only destroy their Object, but their Subject ; and in both themselves : it's manifest therefore that the Wise Author of Nature, intended them not for states, but only for transient Passions, that should soon be laid aside.

Secondly. I proceed to shew that a due affection to the things of this World, that is, the Riches and Honours and Pleasures of Life, is the proper issue of, and an effect agreeable to the Faculties of Man, and to the Principles that are natural to him, and to the Circumstances in which he is.

By a due Affection to the things of this World, I understand such a valuation of them as is answerable to their real goodness and usefulness ; to the reference they have to the common Good, to the Happiness of Man especially both Present and Future, not to be inordinately affected to them, nor immoderately ; this is to keep our selves unspotted from the World ;

World ; that notwithstanding all the representations that are made of them ; tho' they have the advantage of making sensible impressions on us ; tho' we be solicited by the Examples of almost all Men to make an earnest pursuit after them ; tho' the too common Opinion of their great Goodness, might almost draw us to Consent, and make us have too good thoughts of them : yet not to suffer our Affections to be inveigled. To converse with Things, and not to be ensnared by them ; with Men, and not to be carried away with their Mistakes, to an admiration of, an undue affection for any of them ; this is that Purity I intend, and that which is in the Text express'd, by keeping our selves unspotted from the World.

When we neither overvalue the praise of Men, nor love Money too much, nor are Servants to sensual Appetite : but consider the Order and Reference these, and all things in this World have to the greatest Good of Man, and esteem them accordingly.

Now I shall endeavour to shew, that such a valuation is agreeable to the Nature and Faculties of Man, and the Circumstances in which he is.

1. In General. It's agreeable to Mans Nature, That his Passions be in subjection to Reason, That his Appetites be regulated by Understanding. That it was intended by the Wise Author of all Nature, that Understanding should be principal in Man, is a Truth so evident, that all Men have acknowledged it. Hence is it, that the vulgar People account it the greatest

est reproach to be accounted Men of no Understanding. To have maimed Bodies, or to be deficient in inferiour Faculties, is no very Ignominious thing, even in their account; but to be short in Understanding, this is matter of Shame.

Hence is it also, that Men think themselves so univerfally accountable for their actions, and are so unsatisfied if they cannot render a Reason to themselves of their actions: And on the same ground is it, that others demand an account of their Proceedings. All which supposes that Man is to act upon Reason, and that Understanding is to go before and conduct his Actions.

Therefore was it that the Philosophers gave this name to our Understanding, τὸ ἡγεμονικόν; intimating that it's Office was to Rule and Govern; to Direct and Lead; in a Word, to preside in Man's Life.

Nor is it reasonable to think otherwise, if we consider the Nature and Excellencies of our Intellectual Faculties. There is none but knows that it is our Mind and Soul that is our Excellency: this is it which gives us pre-eminence above the Beasts; they have the same inferiour Appetites and Affections with us, but are short in Mind and Understanding, which is certainly far more Divine and Excellent than the little low Appetites of the Body. And how incongruous would it then be, for the Greater to serve the Less; the Better the Worse, the Honourable the Base, that a Spirit should be Slave to a Body, and a Mind Vassal to Matter? This is most unnatural disorder.

But

But besides this consideration of the Excellency and Dignity of our Minds, there is another of the Nature of Reason, which shews its Office, that it ought to regulate and govern all our Bodily and Mundane Affections and Inclinations ; for what is Reason but a Collection of Experiments and Discourses, made by comparing one thing with another ? We remember what's past, we have a clear Idea of what's present ; and by these we are enabled to make a conjecture at what will be ; and so to guide our Actions. We have large thoughts of things we can fully and freely consider ; remember what was, take notice of what is, and from thence infer and argue.

Now certainly all this is for the safe and good conduct of our Lives. Wherefore are we better furnish'd than Brutes ; but that we may manage our selves better ? Why is Reason given us, but that we should not be as the Horse and the Mule, that have no Understanding ? It's Office is certainly to restrain and govern those Appetites and Inclinations, which would be exorbitant and irregular. Man's Desires and Passions, inflamed by imagination, if Reason did not quench the Fire, would burn up the World : When they are swell'd with Imagination and Phantasy they are so immoderate and violent, that they would destroy him whose they are, and undo other Men, and put the whole course of Nature into Disorder.

Therefore he that was the Author, and is the Preserver of Nature, he whose Design it was to give and to continue Being to his Creatures,

tures, he intended not that Passions should be masterless and wild, but restrained and bounded, and made gentle and tame, by Reason and Understanding.

But when I say, our Desires and Affections should be governed by Reason, I do not mean, that they should all have their first Rise, and sole Original from it; I say, they should be govern'd by, not that they must wholly proceed from it. I make Understanding, the Governour of all Desires, not the Parent and sole Cause of all: there are other Causes in the Body, and some will say in the Soul too of many Desires, which yet are none of them exempt from the Jurisdiction and Authority of our Reason and Judgment: they are directly or indirectly, mediately or immediately, under the Power and Conduct of Understanding.

So that tho it did not give Being to those natural Appetites of Hunger and Thirst, yet it gives Laws to them; it sets Bounds, which it will not suffer them to transgress. It is in its Power to hinder the beginning of many Desires, which arise from other Causes; and where that cannot be done, yet Reason can hinder the complying with them very often.

This that I have now said, may give Answer to a tacit Objection which lies against this Assertion, That it's agreeable to Nature that Desires and Passions should be regulated by Reason; when as it's impossible they should, many of them being natural, and raising from other Causes, which are not under the Dominion of Reason.

I answer : No more is required of Reason, but what is supposed it can do ; no Obligation from God or Man to Impossibilities. Now most, or all that Reason can do, either to prevent the beginning or fulfilling of Desires, may be reduced to these Heads.

1. That it can take time to consider, before it resolve or permit to act. It can resolve, notwithstanding any sudden Apprehensions, that it will further consider.

2. It can by this means give a more full and true Representation, than appears at first view, of what's good and evil ; what is, or is not possible and probable. And,

3. It can give Diversion, and represent other Objects, whereby the Violence of that *Impetus*, wherewith the Desire was carried out after some one, will be abated. And,

4. So far as all the other Causes of Desires fall within Knowledg, and are under the Influence of Counsel, it may be supposed to prevent the Harm that would come by them, by preparing us for their Assaults ; that is, chiefly by a full Employment, a temperate Diet, but healthful, that shall not incline to Abstinence, no more than it does to Excess ; a convenient mixture of Society and Solitude ; either wholly unacquaintance with, or a frequent converse with the Objects of our Desire.

These are the ways that Reason can take to free us from the wildness of Imagination, from the hurry of an *Impetus*, and the haste of first and sudden Apprehensions ; from too long fixing on any one Object, (which are the great Causes of all immoderate Desires)
and

and putting us in the best Posture to receive their Impressions.

In sum; the Affections and Appetites, which arise from Ignorance and Mistake, from ill Discourse, and want of Consideration, as from their Original and principal Cause, may be prevented by the good use of our Minds. They had not been, if there had not been Unreasonableness and Folly; and therefore they vanish away before Knowledge and Understanding, as the Shadows do before the Light.

2. Those that are the Issues of the Conjunction of Soul and Body, and are excited by those Motives, which the Soul in this State of Union cannot but take notice of, their Force may be abated, and they need not be complied with: If a Man cannot wholly secure himself from the Importunity of these Affections, yet he may make that more tolerable, and it's always in his Power not to gratify them.

3. And still much more easy is it to preserve our selves quiet from the Molestation of those Appetites that are excited in us by outward Objects, and by the Mediation of our Senses.

1. Of the first sort are Covetousness and Ambition.

2. Of the second, Hunger and Thirst, Sense of bodily Pain and Pleasure, and other Corporal Appetites.

3. Of the third, Love of Musick and Beauty, and whatever Affections may be excited by Discourse, or by any Impressions made on our external Senses.

I have been the more distinct in this Particular, because it is of so great Consequence, to know what power Understanding hath over Appetites and Affections; and to know the ways in which it prevents or restrains them: For this Knowledge will both direct us in that which is very material, the Government of our Desires and Passions, and also free us from much of that Unquietness, that our Ignorance here would expose us to. For many blame themselves for that which is no Fault, and account that sinful which is natural and necessary, and was found in our Saviour himself whilst he was upon Earth, and will, and must be, whilst we have Bodies of this make, and Souls so near them.

But I come to Particulars; and here I will do two things.

- I. Shew when Affections are evil. And,
- II. What Reason is, and how it doth secure us from such evil Affections to this World.

I. Then our Appetites and Passions are evil, when they are vain, or when they are mischievous, and that is in one of these Cases.

1. When they are misplaced, directed to wrong Objects. When we love what's not good, and desire what's not possible. The former of these is pernicious to us; the latter, at best, is a vain foolish Appetite.

Then

Then the case is thus with us, when we love Sin, and hate Vertue; when we hate Love and Meekness, which is the Spirit of God, the Temper of Heaven; and love the malicious, proud, covetous, lustful Spirit of the worst Men in this World, which is the Diabolical Nature.

And then we desire Impossibles, when we seek after that which is inconsistent with Human Nature, that which is proper to Angels or other Natures. These Desires engage us in vain Attempts: and the mischief is, that whilst we are in pursuit after that which is unattainable, we neglect that which we might have, and is the proper Perfection of our Nature.

2. The second is when they are too vehement and intense, or else too remiss, as to degree: When the Affection is not proportioned to it's Object, when the Appetite or Aversion is not proportionate to the degrees of Good and Evil in the thing, but we love a little Good vehemently, and are carried out with mighty dislike to a small Evil; when things do not deserve our Passions, there is not that in them that should excite such Affections. This is reducible to the former Head.

There is also another Particular, in respect of which they may be said to be faulty as to Degree; that is, in respect of the Subject, when they are destructive of that by being over vehement; or are prejudicial to the Man himself, by being cold and remiss. The Inconvenience of the first is, that they overwork him; of the second, that they do not

sufficiently engage him to Action and Attempts.

'Tis the first of these that I have to consider, when Men over-love the World, *i. e.* value Riches, and Honour, and Pleasures more than they deserve, love them with the greatest Love, such a one perhaps as is really hurtful to the Man himself, as disquiet his Mind, as destroy his Health, as tend to the ruine both of Soul and Body.

The sum is, our Appetites are then evil, when they hurt us, or others; and they do that, when they are either misplac'd, or disproportionate.

II. I proceed to shew what Reason is, and how it preserves us from these evil Affections. Reason, we all know, is that Faculty which is given Man for the discovery of Truth, and to furnish him with the Knowledg that's useful to him, especially with the Knowledg of Good and Evil: and it's natural to this Faculty to enquire into the Natures, the Causes and Effects of all things that are within its ken; and when it is at its own disposal, not enslaved to Passion, it then considers impartially and universally, compares diligently, and after all, concludes not lightly or hastily, but leisurely and on good grounds.

When Reason is, as it should be, it is only commanded by Truth; nothing but Evidence can determine its assent, and such Evidence as has past a strict Examination, and according to the degrees of that, doth it assent more or less strongly.

And

And thus Reason secures us from that Ignorance, and those Mistakes of Good and Evil, which are the great Causes of all immoderate Affections.

Omitting the rest, I will only here take notice of two of the Particulars.

1. Reason is universal, and that's a great help against inordinate Appetites, which very often proceed from a too great Confinedness of Thoughts. When a Man's Soul is contracted within the compass of a few Things and Persons, no wonder if he over-much affect them. He hath a huge Love, and vast Desires, and they must be let out; and if the many proper Objects of them be not known to him, they will go out to those few that are, and so they have that Affection which is due to the whole World.

Thus we see Children as vehemently engaged in pursuit of their few Trifles, as Men are about their many weighty Employments: and the Men who only look at, and think of this World, and the things that are seen, are as vehement and earnest in their Love, and Desire, and Fear, as they are whose better Knowledge presents them with a view of Eternity, and future Happiness.

Thus as our Understanding increases, and shews us more and better things, it disengages us from those too violent Affections, which we had to some few Particulars. We are not any longer as Children, who having seen but little of the World, are apt to admire, and be passionately affected with every thing: whereas when they are grown to the Experience and

Knowledg of Men, and have many other things in their Eye, they have no great Passion for them.

Thus we see how Reason, which is universal, assists a Man against those immoderate Affections, which arise from contracted Particularity, and Ignorance of many things.

This is the great difference betwixt Sense and Reason: that's particular, and confines to Singulars; this is universal, and extends it self to Multitudes. And again, Reason reaches to great Distance; whereas Sense operates on Objects that are near.

And this is an eminent Advantage which a Man hath above a Beast; and if he act like a Man, he must not be affected only to some few present Objects, but universally, and to those at greatest distance. Which Largeness of Heart is quite contrary to that contracted Selfishness, which is the great Ground of most unreasonable Desires. Therefore are Men so culpable in their Appetites, because they intend themselves, and consider not others; and that arises from want of that Knowledg, which would discover other Persons besides themselves, and other things than what they know.

2. Reason compares one thing with another, the want of which is the great Cause of immoderate Affection: For Men do not so often fail in loving that which is not good, as in loving the less good, and not the greater; or in loving the less more than the greater. Few of the things that are the Object of our Love, but have some Good; even Sin it self many times brings some Profit, or some Pleasure,

sure, or Credit with it : but to compare the Profit with the Damage, the Pleasure with the Pain, the Credit with the Ignominy and Shame, this is the Work of Reason, this is that wherein Man excels Beasts, and one Man is above another.

A Beast, if he be thirsty, must drink ; but Man considers, that tho it will be pleasant in quenching his Thirst, it may increase his Disease.

This comparing one thing with another, is the Foundation of all prudent and wise Choices, and it certainly moderates our too vehement Desires to the things of this World : For we shall upon a slight Enquiry find, that Vertue is more valuable than Riches ; and the Quiet that Innocence and Honesty bring, far more desirable than worldly Greatness ; and that Peace and Severity, which follows the discharge of our Duty, and Religious Practice, is much better than any, than all Earthly Felicities without it.

To conclude this Particular : If it be agreeable to Human Nature, that Reason governs, and we must stand to its Determinations ; then Fantasy and Humour, and Imagination must not be principal in us ; and if those do not rule, I am sure, most of our immoderate Desires will cease ; for nothing but Delusion and Dreams, and unaccountable Fantasy, and wild Imagination, are the Spring of all those monstrous and unnatural Desires that Men have of Riches. And from the same Causes is it, that Men are so hot and vehement in their pursuit after Honour.

I say, if Mens Minds were awakened, they would soon discover their own Delusion, and see that these things are not such as Fantasy had represented them.

First ; The Finiteness and Littleness of our Being, is a cause of moderate Affections and Desires to things without us. Since it is not much that we can *have*, or *use*, or *enjoy*, we ought not to desire much.

There's no natural good Desire that's vain ; and yet it would be vain, if we should affect things without reference to our possessing, using, enjoying them. Now a Man cannot be in the Possession of much, his Presence is confined to a very little space, and in reality he has only what he's present to. The Philosopher said, what he had, he carried up and down with him ; that is, he accounted nothing his, which he had not with him.

And in truth, there is nothing ours which we carry not about us ; what we have not, we do not possess, and we have not what we are separated from. *Solomon* makes a slight account of that good, that arises from seeing things with our Eyes, *Eccles. 5. 11*. But how little is that Good, when we do not so much as see it ?

How little is it that Men can *use* of the things of the World for themselves ? They cannot put many of them to the best use, either in respect of the things, or themselves, but are forced to alienate them, to dispose them to others. Much is cumbersome, an impediment.

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The Sum is; very much of this World is not useful, nor can a Man use much. Every Man hath so much, as any hath need of; and most Men have as much as is useful to any.

And for *Enjoyment*, that's short and languid. These things that we so vehemently affect, do not afford us those Delights we seek for; when we come near to them, and grasp at them, our Hands are fill'd with Air very often, but ever fall short of that Pleasure our Imagination had promised us.

Besides, a little will afford us all the true Delight that abundance doth: nay, perhaps we may enjoy more in our small Portion of these things than they that wallow in abundance can, because they are distracted with it. And I am sure, the more moderate our Pleasures are, the greater and more lasting. And that Man is ordinarily more honoured, who is least dignified. Thus the Finiteness of our Beings moderate our Desires.

Secondly; Circumstances.

1. Men, who are, (1.) Finite as to Duration, 1 Cor. 7. 29, 30, 31. Our Houses must not continue for ever. (2.) Living in Society with other Men, who have by Nature equal Priviledg with us, who need the same things; we ought not therefore to engross.

2. Christians: (1.) We are taught that these things cannot make us happy. Man's Life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. (2.) We have greater and better things proposed to us. Look not at the things which are seen.

Man

Man is never as he should be till his Religion be natural to him, and I know no such way to make it natural, as to persuade him, that the Practice of it is good in it self, for then he'll act out of choice and freely : Whereas if he be religious from external Motives, only from fear, that if he neglect it, he shall be punished ; nay, or from hope meerly, that if he be religious, he shall be rewarded ; he is yet in the lower Forms of Religion.

He only is perfectly so, who besides the fears of Evils that will be inflicted on the Irreligious, and hopes of the Good that will be bestowed on them that are religious, is also persuaded that the Religious Life is in and for it self eligible, and to be preferred before an Ungodly Course. When he not only fears the Punishment that is threatned to a wicked, and hopes for the Reward that's promised to a good Life, by the wise Governour of the World ; but also sees the Good and Evil that's inherent to, and necessarily consequent on such Practises : he is then thoroughly and fully brought off from Wickedness, and as much engaged to good Actions, as he can be.

This Man loves Religion, and hates Wickedness for themselves ; and he will in all likelihood be constant and persevere, because he acts with more Satisfaction, and full Assurance of Mind, than he who is ignorant of this can : for so long as a Man thinks his Actions to be in themselves evil, or not good in themselves, and at present, tho he may hope they will bring him in a Reward hereafter, he cannot do them with that Complacency that he would, if he

he understood that themselves not only will be, but are necessarily and at present good. As no Man that takes a bitter Potion, which he is perswaded will have a good Effect, and prevent or remove a Disease, can have the same Pleasure in it, as he hath in his Meat, which because it is so agreeable to him, causes a pleasant Sense when it's received.

To sum up what I would say: The more any one loves his Religion, the more and more firmly religious he is; and the better he thinks of it, the more he loves it. Now he that looks on it as good in it self, good at present, whilst it's practis'd, and that great Good doth necessarily and certainly attend it, and doth not at all depend on the Disposition of a free Agent; he thinks it much better, than he who places all its Good in Reverſion; and makes that also to depend wholly on a voluntary Determination.

In short, where the Dangers of Irreligion appear both greater, nearer, and more unavoidable, and the Advantage of being religious, more and more present and certain; there Men are more strongly engaged to it: For both their Hopes are confirmed, and Fears ascertain'd. Here not only Faith, and Hope, and Fear, but also Reason and Sense it self, concur to make them religious: And that's the case, where Religion is understood to be good in it self.

I am endeavouring to shew, That two of the principal Parts of it, Charity and Purity, are so, and am come to the second Particular, viz.

2dly,

2dly, They are good because they are Perfections, and perfective of Human Nature. Man is so very considerable amongst all the Beings that God made, that he seems to have had regard to him in the whole frame of things; and tho we cannot truly say, that the World was made wholly for Man, yet undoubtedly his Good was chiefly intended by the wise Author of all things. And therefore when we say any thing is good, we ought not to overlook Man, but must consider how it contributes to his Welfare.

I say, when we speak of Good in general, Man's Good must not be left out of the Computation, because that makes a part, and a principal part of it. All things are good or evil, as they are beneficial or hurtful to Man. And those also are best or worst, which are good or evil to Man himself immediately in his Being and Powers; far more considerable therefore than those which have their Effects on his Name, or Estate, or outward Circumstances: that is, as the Philosophers used to say, the internal Goods are better than the external, than the *bona Fortuna*. But where any thing is beneficial to Man in all respects, where it can do good to his Body and Mind, and also to himself in his Name and Estate, that is best.

And by the way, this is the Reason why we account God the chiefest Good, because he is good to us in all respects; he can do us good in every particular: he can both give Health and Life, and Wisdom and Vertue, and Peace of Mind, and likewise make us honoured amongst Men,
and

and his Blessing will encrease our Substance; whatever we want or desire for this or another Life, God can give it us.

Next to God, Man is, or may be best to himself, and that is, by doing those actions which will mend him, and better his condition.

I am now to shew how, in the two particulars of my Text, Man is advantaged every way. But first I will endeavour to make out how Charity and Purity tend to perfect Humane Nature both in our selves and others; and this they do manifestly, because they preserve and promote both the Animal Life and the Rational, and these two make up the whole of Man.

I. They hugely contribute to the welfare of his Body, to keep that in a Healthful plight.

II. They principally conduce to the good State of his Soul, which seems to me to consist especially in four things. 1. Wisdom. 2. Virtue. 3. Quiet and Tranquillity. 4. Joy and Pleasure.

I. Body. Tho' the Soul be principal in Man, yet it is not the whole; and therefore Religion, which was by God designed for the good of Man, doth not overlook, much less hurt the Body, but indeed mightily befriend it. They therefore who make their Religion prejudicial to their Bodies, are in a mistake, they understand it not; for it directs Man to look on his
Body

Body as a part, tho the less part of himself, and consequently not to neglect and be regardless of it. And there's nothing more tends to preserve it in Health, than Religious Practice, than good Life.

For tho, as I said, its principal Influence be on the Soul, that being capable of more than the Body; yet this precious Ointment that's poured on the head of the Soul, runs down to the lowest Hem of his Garment, the Body. This greatest Good must needs be diffusive, all its Neighbours shall fare the better for it.

Particularly, *Charity* doth not only do good to others, but to the Body of him that's charitable: And for a proof of this, let any one observe himself when he is fullest of Good-Will to others, and most inclined to do good Offices; and he shall discover the motion in which Life consists to be both equal and vigorous, his Countenance clear and serene, and his whole Body disposed to action: and Hatred, or but Uncharitableness, have quite contrary effects on our Body; for the one makes the Pulse unequal, the other slow.

Malice makes Man look with a scaring, frightful Visage; and want of Love makes his look dull and heavy: but 'tis only Good Will that gives that sweet air, that brisk pleasantness to his Countenance, those soft and gentle looks which nothing else can, and which is more Beauty, and gives a greater Lustre, and is more acceptable than either Colour or Feature.

I need not say, how Charity not only secures a Man's Body from those Violences which
Malice

Malice exposes him to ; but also instigates the Justice and Gratitude of other Men to make those returns of Kindness in which the Body shares, and which nothing but Good-Will and Beneficence could have engaged them to.

Secondly. Purity. How much the keeping our affections to this World within their bounds, doth towards the Body's welfare, is notoriously evident. There's no Physician but will inform us, That the Government of our Passions is of absolute Necessity to keep our selves in Health.

Indeed there is no Man, tho his Reason doth not, his Experience and Observation will instruct him in this ; for impetuous Passions, wild and extravagant Desires, exorbitant and unruly Appetites are not only the causes of Diseases, and end in Death ; but themselves are real Distempers of the Body as well as the Mind ; nor are Mens Bodies only hurt by them when they are gratified, but when they are excited.

I will not in this Case call for Reason and Discourse, but only appeal to Sense and Experience, for these will sufficiently assure us that all inordinate Affections, and irregular Appetites are in their beginnings, Diseases ; for they have all the Symptoms of Diseases, and most of them in the end, Death.

How many have by their Sensuality and Brutishness, murder'd themselves ? And how many by their Covetousness, or Pride have provoked others to murder them ? Thus prejudicial are immoderate Desires to the

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Health

Health and Life of Man : but on the contrary, Natural Appetites, and innocent and governable Affections, are the Preservers of Health, and the Increasers of Life ; for they give both vigour and continuance to the motion of Life, they dispose and engage the Body to activity ; and indeed themselves are the beginning of that Action, which so much contributes to Health, and is so necessary to Life.

Were it not for these Desires, the Body of Animals, for ought I know, would stand as still as Trees ; 'tis the *appetitus Boni*, and the *Fugamali* that puts Animals into motion, and distinguishes them from Plants, that alway keep their station.

I need not call in for Testimony, nor seek for Arguments to evince this, which I believe every Man's Observation will satisfy him is true ; that Desires and Affections so long as they are kept within the Limits which Nature and Reason, which wise Laws and Religion set, are great Friends to Health, and Preservers of Life ; but when they transgress those bounds, when they become lawless and unnatural, they then do not only war against the Soul, but are Enemies to the Body ; prejudicial to its Health, and destructive of natural Life.

Assuredly, if the causes of every Man's Death were engraven on his Tomb, we should find that inordinate Affections and extravagant Appetites, that Pride, and Intemperance and Uncleaness were the Murderers of most that died. I am sure if other things have kill'd their Thousands, these have their Ten Thousands.

Their

Their Pride and Passion either ingagē them in Quarrels, where they are Stabb'd in a private Encounter; or their Intemperance throws them into Feavers or Surfeits, or some of the Diseases that arise from Excess; or their Uncleanness brings them into Distempers that are as dangerous as they are painful and noisom; so that I may use the Apostle's words in this sense, *he that commits these Wickednesses, sins against his own Body.*

I have the rather thus long insisted on this particular, That all Pleas might be taken from Sin and Irreligion; for it pretends not to serve the Soul, and if it be found hurtful to the Body too, there can be no colour of Excuse why it should be allowed. Man must first cease to love himself, to desire his own good, before he could resolve to practise Wickedness, and be irreligious, *i. e.* Unchaste or Intemperate, &c.

And for their sakes also who have so great a regard to their Body and Life, and so little or none to their Soul, that they being convinced how much Charity and Purity conduce to the good state of their Bodies, might by this be ingaged to the practice of them. Thus we prevail with Children to do good Actions by low and little Motives, but such as they are apprehenve of; and thus must they be dealt with who are not yet advanc'd above the Childish Estate. This for the First,

II. Soul. I have said before wherein the good state of Souls consists, *viz.* 1. In Know-

ledg and Wisdom. 2. In Vertue and Honesty. 3. In Peace and Quietness. 4. In Joy and Pleasure. And now I proceed to shew what Purity and Charity contribute to each of these.

First; Knowledg and Wisdom. I put these together, tho' they be so distinct that they may be separate. There may be Knowledg where there is no Wisdom; a very knowing Man may be a very foolish Man; that is, he is either ignorant in things that are Good and Evil, and unskilful in matters of Practice; or else his Understanding is not principal, his Choices and Actions are not governed by his Knowledg and best considered Thoughts. But they are both great Perfections of the Soul.

Amongst others, there are these four dispositions of that Soul that shall attain to them.

1. A sincere Love of Truth, especially that which is Practicall.

2. A great Industry, and unwearied diligence in pursuit after it.

3. A free and impartial Consideration, an indifference of Mind, to assent to whatever shall come with greatest Evidence.

4. Calm and Quiet.

No Man ordinarily either requires or keeps Knowledg who is not thus disposed. For,

1. If he do not love Truth, he will not enquire after it; if he do not value it, he will not seek it: And if he do love Truth, but prefer

prefer not that which is Practical, which will guide his Life, he may content himself in Theories and Speculations; and so fall short of that Wisdom which is the chief Knowledg, and makes the great difference amongst Men.

2. And if there be not great diligence used in seeking Truth, it will not be found; therefore *Solomon* exhorts, that *we should seek for Wisdom as for Silver, and search for her as for hid Treasure.*

Men that would get Knowledg, must consider by themselves, and consult with others; they must read, and discourse, and think; and do these often if they will understand. And,

3. Must apply themselves to this without any Partiality or Prejudice; the Mind must not be prepossess'd or bias'd by any inclination to one side, but the Ballance must be held even.

Now see how Purity comports with this Temper, and how prejudicial inordinacy of Affection is to it. Wisdom enters into Holy Souls, &c.

But particularly,

1. The love of Truth is natural to the Soul; it as naturally thirsts after all Knowledg, as the Body doth after Drink. And this natural Appetite after Truth, continues in the Soul till violence be done to it; that is, till immoderate Desires, and vehement Passions have changed it: But when they once take place, there's no room left for Truth. When the Soul is engaged in an ear-

nest pursuit after Wealth, or Corporeal Pleasures, or Honour; Truth, and the best and most useful Knowledge is then neglected.

Sometimes indeed Men will get Knowledge for the Reputation it gives, and for the Gain it brings; it's the Knowledge in vogue, the Knowledge that's gainful, which is very often the least considerable, of least real value.

How seldom have we seen men greatly affected with any of the good things of the World, great Lovers of Truth? If they be lovers of Money, they commonly, if not hate, yet undervalue Knowledge. They account there's no other Wisdom but to heap up Riches, at least they will seek none other. And the Voluptuous Sensualist is a despiser of Knowledge and Wisdom. These are too subtle and spiritual to be the Objects of Sense, and he hath done very much to the laying asleep of other Faculties: He is making himself a Beast as fast as he can; and Truth and Knowledge stand in his way: His works are works of Darkness, and he hates the Light that discovers them.

Assuredly, he who is carried by a strong inclination to immoderate gratifications of his Sensual Appetite, his Love to Truth and Wisdom will wax cold.

I know there was a Sect of Philosophers who placed their Chief Good in Pleasure: but I am so charitable, and I meet with so many excellent Sayings of the Founders of that Sect; and his Life was such a Pattern of Temperance and Moderation, that I cannot but think it was another Pleasure than arises from Corporal Gratifications, especially if immoderate; and
that

that they kept their Bodily Appetites within the bounds that Nature and Laws had set.

And the Ambitious Man hath so great an esteem for his Honour, that he cannot love Truth in any Degree as he ought ; it's Glory, and not Wisdom, that he pursues.

2. Nor need I say, That men engaged by any of these Affections will not, cannot with great Diligence and continued Industry pursue after Wisdom. They are so taken up with them, they have neither Time nor Strength left for this. The thoughts of his Honour fills the Proud Man's days and nights ; and the Covetous sits up late, and rises early, and eats the Bread of Carefulness, that he may compass such an Estate. And the Voluptuous, the Sons of Excess and Sensuality, they waste their Spirits, and spend the strength of their Years in forbidden Gratifications: So that none of them are vacant or able to be at the pains to find out Truth ; they both want Time and Spirits, and if they want either, they will fall short of Truth. He that is not at leisure, hath not vacant time, or is weary, this Man cannot use that diligence which is necessary for such an undertaking.

3. And it's notorious how the Soul is enslaved by inordinacy ; it's no longer free than it's under the Government of Reason ; when it once gives way to inordinate affections, it then becomes a Slave, and is obsequious to its Master, is disposed by him, judges as he will, These Desires, where they rule, are a Bias

put on the Soul, which strongly inclines it; they are a Weight in the Scale against Truth for the most part.

The Man of Honour will not be perswaded by the greatest Evidence, if it make not for his Credit; if it be reproach'd, 'tis certainly an Error, a Lie with him; and if it be not honoured, tho never so great and important a Truth, it's neglected by him.

And how can Covetous or Intemperate Men heartily seek after that Knowledg which will discover their Follies, and endanger the lessening of their Estates, and the renouncing of their Pleasures?

To conclude this; certainly 'tis the Love of this World that eats out of Mens Minds the Love of Knowledg: and the grand reason why so many know so little, and are so much mistaken, is, that they are engaged and enslaved by inordinate Affections to this World. They either will not take the pains, or have not time to enquire after Knowledg, or they are not indifferent to it: they are not content that should be true which is, but according as it suits with their Desires.

And what is it that makes Men they never propound to themselves great and excellent Ends; but their being over much affected with the things of this World? Certainly, if they did not inordinately love Riches, if they were not over desirous of Honour, and set too high a price on Pleasure, they would then aim at the greatest and most publick Good. But that affection which is only proper to such an end as this, they have wholly engaged to the getting

ting an Estate, or some such thing.

And what is it that takes men off from prosecuting, or hinders them from attaining this end, when they do at any time intend it, but their Pride or Covetousness, or love of Pleasure and sensual Gratifications?

4. Quiet. This is as necessary to Consideration, as that is to Truth. Passions they put the Soul in a hurry, fill it with Noise and Confusion; especially Malice and Anger, and these that are opposite to Charity.

Secondly; Vertue. When I have proved that Charity and Purity conduce to Wisdom, I have proved they do also conduce to Vertue; for whatever the mis-judging World think, these two are the same thing; whoever is Wise is Virtuous, and the Wicked Man in *Solomon's* account, (who was a very good Judge) is a Fool.

The Wisdom from above, saith *St. James*, *is first pure, then peaceable, &c.* It dwells not in an impure, uncharitable Soul. Vertuous Practice is the great end of all Knowledge and Truth: if this be not, our Knowledge proves Vain and Mischievous; Vain, in that it doth not attain its end; Mischievous, because it serves only to disquiet and torment.

Vertue is Moderation and doing well; these are Notions that comprise all Vertues, and these are the Notions that the Masters give us of Vertue; And if these be true, then Purity and Charity are not only conducive to, but parts of it.

For

For Purity, is the moderation of our Affections to the things of this World and Body; and Charity, is good Will to Men, or the Principle of doing good to others.

Particularly. Men are then vertuous and honest when they act according to their Judgment, and practise according to their most deliberate and best consider'd Thoughts. Inordinacy of Affection is the great impediment of Charity.

Charity makes Men active, and Purity keeps the Soul in that state, that it will act according to its Judgment. Mens reason would sufficiently instruct them, in what way to pursue so excellent a Design, as the best and most Publick Good, if it were not blinded by Passion, and inordinate Love to this World.

In short, This is the great Reason why Men do not propose or prosecute Designs that are Great and Good, or why they pitch upon wrong Means, and all their Endeavours prove vain and fruitless. Who ever knew a Man, that had a vehement Passion for this World, to be a Man of good Intentions and excellent Designs? How can it be, that he who is enslaved by low Appetites and little Desires, should have great and generous Aims? A Man whose Soul is contracted by such mean Affections, cannot have that largeness of Heart, which is so necessary to Wisdom.

In summ; If we observe, we shall find that almost all the unworthy Designs Men aim at, and all the unwise Choices they make; that is, the greatest part of the Folly that is amongst Men, proceeds from their immoderate Desires
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to the things of this World. There is scarce any Man a Fool, but his Pride, or Covetousness, or Sensuality have made him so. And thus I have shewn of Purity, how conducive it is to Knowledg, &c.

Thirdly, Charity doth also befriend Knowledg and Wisdom: Because,

1. It engages Men to seek after Knowledg, that being one principal way, wherein one Man can help and serve another. When the Charitable Loving-Man is casting about in his Thoughts how he may be beneficial to the World, and do most good, he presently understands that the best way he can be useful to other Men, is, by imparting good, and useful, and true Knowledg to them; and then he will diligently pursue it, and with more earnestness than others; because, as *Seneca* saith, he doth not only do it *ut proficiat, sed ut proficit*. And,

2. What Knowledg he doth attain, he uses, and that's the way both to perfect and preserve it. When Men stay in Speculation, their Knowledg proves deficient and imperfect very often; but its use and exercise that discovers the Truth and Perfection of it. And how often are meer Speculations lost, when those notions that are every day used are kept?

Now Love and Charity, as it will not suffer Men to hoard and hide Money when it may be useful, and supply the Necessities of those that would borrow, or do beg: so neither will it suffer him to conceal his Knowledg,

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These are the charitable Man's Words, *In hoc gaudeo discere, ut doceam: nec me res ulla delectabit, licet eximia sit & salutaris, quam mihi uni sciturus sim. Si cum hac exceptione mihi sapientia detur, ut inclusam teneam, nec enunciem, rejiciam.* And he very wisely resolves; for to communicate and be beneficial, is not only to comply with Nature, and to serve the Ends he was made for; but he also takes the way to improve his Knowledg: for this is the Method which God hath established, and will observe for ever, *menti dabitur.*

He that uses what he hath, shall keep that, and increase his Store: And 'tis Charity that makes Men use the Knowledg they have, and that as well as other things, is, by being used, both preserved and improved.

And thus I have briefly shewn how Charity makes us more knowing and wise, by making us seek after Knowledg, and by making us use that we have. I might also add,

3. That it determines us to that Knowledg which is most useful. Many of our Sciences are very remote from use, and 'tis of little Advantage either to the Man himself, or the rest of the World, that he's acquainted with such Theories, or Terms of Art. But the Knowledg of that which nearly concerns Man, is of himself, and the way to govern his Actions, and those things which he converses much with: And this is that which Charity and Good-will determines him to.

The first Christians burnt many Books of curious, but useles Arts: their Good-will to the World made them more to mind those that
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were of greater Consequence, more useful to Mankind.

I am now to shew how much Purity and Charity conduce to the increase of all Religion and Vertue, and Honesty; which are so considerable a part of the good State of our Souls, that it's absolutely impossible to be happy without them, or to be miserable with them.

For he that lives not in a due regard to God, nor according to Nature, nor acts agreeable to his Judgment, and best considered Thoughts, cannot be happy, because he's unquiet and disturb'd with Thoughts that contradict and condemn his Actions. Whereas the religious, vertuous, honest Man hath a peaceable Mind, and a quiet Conscience, and he that hath this, whatever his other Circumstances are, his Condition cannot be very ill.

But certainly I need not spend Words to prove that Vertue is the great Perfection of the Soul of Man, and that Honesty is its good State. There's no Man that will either hearken to Reason, or be concluded by Experience, but knows this to be the Health and Strength, the Beauty also, and Liberty of Souls, when they act in Accommodation to Nature, and their Affections and Actions bear Proportion to their own Powers, and to the Qualities of other things: when they are so attemper'd as to be good and agreeable both in respect of themselves and other Beings; when they govern themselves by Counsel and good Judgment, and the most mature, and deliberate, and best considered Thoughts bear sway, and the Will is subject and obedient to reason,
then

then is the Soul healthful and strong; then is it rescued into a State of as great and good Liberty, as is desirable for a Creature: and then is it that the Soul is the most amiable, lovely, beautiful thing in the World.

This Symmetry and Proportion that's betwixt the Understanding and Things, and then betwixt the Judgment and Will, and lastly betwixt the Will and Action, is infinitely more delightful than any corporeal Proportions can be.

Supposing therefore that to do well is the good State of the Soul. I will now proceed to shew, what Purity and Charity contribute to our being vertuous and honest, which I shall do in three Particulars.

1. They increase Vertue by increasing Wisdom, and adding to our Knowledg.
2. They being Vertues themselves, lead on others, and draw us to the practice of them.
3. They remove the greatest Impediments of Vertue.

First; That Vertue is founded in Knowledg, and that Honesty is the Effect of Wisdom, is, I hope, no Paradox in our Account, however the Folly of the World misjudg; for they think, and say, that Vertue proceeds from Weakness, and none are honest, but they are also silly; if they had but Wit enough, they would be as dishonest and vicious as any.

But this is as untrue and unaccountable as the rest of their Opinions: It hath no Foundation,

dation, and is contrary to Scripture and all Sense. All the ground of it that I can imagine is this, that they see some weak Men to have honest Minds, and others that are witty and of great Parts, to be very wicked. And that this is a very weak ground, is very clear. For,

(1.) They frequently judg of Wit and Parts by false Measures, and think that to be Honesty very often, which is not, and sometimes account that Sin, which is the contrary. Whatever is suddenly and confidently spoken, and reflects on another Man, that passes currant for Wit, tho it be not Sense, if examin'd, but only the Expression of Malice. And they account Wit and Wisdom the same thing, which yet, many of the Poets witness, are too often separated.

And how often do they mistake Melancholy for Religion, and Dulness for Vertue, and doing nothing, for doing well? They call a Man of Thoughts, Sober; and him that hath no Wit, Judicious; the superstitious Man, Religious; the Man of no Discourse, Wise; the Meek, they say, hath no Spirit; and the Ambitious, a great Mind.

These and many other such Mistakes, makes the Objection of no weight, which proceeds on such weak Grounds. How can we depend on them who judg by such wrong Measures, that they neither think truly of Wit nor Wisdom, of Vertue nor Vice?

(2.) And if it be sometimes found that Men that are honest, have not the most Wit, or that Men of great Parts, are also Men of great Vices: yet it will not follow that we are to impute Wicked-

Wickedness to Reason, or ascribe Vertue to Folly. They may be in the same Subject, tho they be in their own Natures contrary: So little Reason have we to think, that they contribute to each other.

But that will turn this Objection quite out of doors, if I can make it out, as I have propounded to do, that Vertue and good Life, are the proper and natural issue of Wisdom and good Understanding; and that Sin and Vice are the genuine Offspring of Folly and Weakness. And this I will endeavour to do; 1. From Authority. 2. From Reason.

1. Scripture is full and clear to this, *Job* 28. 28. *Psal.* 111.10. *Luke* 1. 17. And *Solomon*, a very good Judg of Wisdom, every where calls the wicked Man, a Fool.

Or, if human Testimony will more prevail, as it will with some; we have *Socrates*, and indeed the whole set of Philosophers agreeing in this, that Wisdom is absolutely necessary to Vertue. They make this a principal Vertue, and an Ingredient in all, and all Vice to derive from Ignorance and Folly.

When *Socrates* said that there was ἐν μόνον ἀγαθόν, ἢ ἐπιστήμη & ἐν μόνον κακόν ἢ ἀμαθία; he plainly refer'd to this: For it's known how much he prefer'd Vertue before all things, even Knowledg it self. And therefore he defined Vertue by Knowledg, and the *Stoicks* from him said, εἶναι μὲν ἀνοίας τὸς κακίας, ὄναι ἀρεταὶ ἐπιστήμαι. But to leave Authorities; and,

2. Consider the things themselves. To be vertuous is to do good, and to do it well. Now Knowledg is very necessary to both: It must shew

show a Man what is good, else he remains ignorant or mistaken ; ignorant, and so desires it not ; mistaken, and so follows that which is evil. But if a Man chance, without Knowledge, to do good, yet he will not, probably do it often, nor certainly. It's only Reason, and true Judgment, that are Principles of Constancy in our Action ; Fantasy and Humor, and all else, are as uncertain as the Wind.

But if he do accidentally once or twice light on that which is good ; yet he doth not do it well, that acts without Knowledge ; that is, tho his Action may be good in respect of others, it is not so in respect of himself. He that acts without Knowledge, doth not act like a Man ; 'tis no human Action, as the Moralists say.

But I will not only prove that Vertue cannot lightly be without Knowledge ; but also that Knowledge cannot lightly be without Vertue : for it's very natural to us to follow after, to will and desire that which we think good, and to will and desire it more or less, according as we do more or less certainly know it to be good.

So then according to this, the better and clearer Knowledge we have of good Actions, the more we shall be determin'd to do them : For most of the Indetermination of the Will of Man, proceeds from Uncertainty in his Understanding ; and the Fluctuation of our Judgment is the Cause of Irresolution in our Will.

And for Honesty, which I take to be Men's acting according to their Principles, or following their Judgment ; tho it be a very commendable

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dable Disposition in the Soul where it is, yet if it be not founded in Knowledg, if those Principles be not true, 'tis of mischievous Consequence; for an obstinate Adhesion to Mistakes and Lies, shuts the Door fast against Goodness.

The sum is, Knowledg will shew a Man what's good and evil, what's best for him to do; and Wisdom directs his Practice, and makes choice of that which is best; and Virtue is nothing else, but a Principle of doing good, of following that which is best.

And 'tis nothing but Ignorance, or Mistake that causes Men to love the Evil, and hate the Good, to determinē themselves to follow that which is worse. They practise ill, because it seems Good to them, and therefore it seems so, because they are deceived. So that want of Knowledg or Error, are the first causes of all the evil Practices in the World.

Whence comes Irreligion towards God, and Injustice to Men, bestial or devilish Sins, but from a gross Mistake, that these are pleasant, or honourable, or profitable Practices? Whereas if they knew that these short and dying Pleasures vanish into great and endless Pains; that the Honour of these Actions is attended with everlasting Shame and Confusion of Face, and that all the Advantage they can have by them, is really a loss, they would not be induced to do them. So that we may very easily resolve all Sin into Folly, and all Goodness into Wisdom.

There is one other Objection yet unanswered, 'tis this: That the more knowing and wise
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any Man is, the more he understands that there is little good or evil in his Actions, and the small difference that there is betwixt them.

To this I reply :

1. If he be truly Knowing, he sees all, or the greatest good and evil of his actions ; he understands not only what they are at present, but what they will be, what will come of them hereafter. And,

2. He sees that the greatest good or evil that can befall Man, is by his Actions : they are, and are the Causes of Man's greatest Happiness or Misery. God hath order'd it so, that as Man acts, he shall be ; if he do well or ill, his State shall be accordingly good or bad ; as he sows, he shall reap.

Nay, if we abstract our Thoughts from God, and the Recompences of another World ; yet the best or worst that usually befalls Man in this Life, depends on his Actions. He that acts from Knowledge and Good-Will, is cheerful and pleas'd ; and where Ignorance is the Principle, and Malice the Ingredient, there Unquietness, and Torture, and Vexation are the attendants.

The Wise-Man knows that Pleasure and Peace are the Companions of honest Intentions and good Practice ; and Disquiet and Torment, and inward Dissatisfaction go along with Wickedness of Life.

Thus then, notwithstanding this Objection also, we see that good Understanding leads to good Life, and Prudence tends to Vertue ; and therefore that which increaseth true Know-

ledg, also increaseth Goodness. Truth in the Understanding will bring Vertue into the Will.

Some of the Moralists have an Opinion, that there is such a concatenation of Vertues, that where one is, all the rest are. I will not prove what I say by so doubtful and disputable an Assertion; but yet thus much is unquestionable, that one Vertue makes way for others, for all. He that practises well in one instance, is in a fair way to do so in many.

There is a mutual connexion and dependence that one good Action hath on another; as 'tis in some sort of Buildings, one Stone cannot stand without the rest; and if but one little breach be made in an Arch, the whole falls down. Or, as it is in the natural Body, every part is serviceable to other; some indeed more, and some less, but all in some degree: so it is in Vertues, every single Vertue contributes to the Service of the whole Compages.

Undoubtedly, as a Man doth in one case, he is disposed to do in others; for every Action leaves behind it a disposition to do the like. He that acts with Reason and Deliberation, and from Judgment in one particular, will be inclined to do so in another, and at last in all.

On this account it is so advisable a Method to bring Persons to be universally Vertuous, first to engage them to do some good Actions, which they perhaps are more naturally inclined to, or have a greater opportunity of doing

doing, which is more easy or pleasant to them; and this will incline them to practise so in other cases that are more difficult.

From this ground it is, that it is so dangerous for Men to be guilty of one vicious practice; because that will spread like Leaven, and insensibly change the whole conversation; and so he that fail'd but in one point at first, by allowing himself in this, within a little time becomes a Transgressor of the whole Law; and this one miscarriage continued in, breaks forth into an universal Impiety.

But I will leave this general Discourse, and shew particularly how Purity and Charity must necessarily contribute to all Vertuous practice. And,

I. This appears, because the general nature of all Vertue is so fully and clearly contain'd in Purity and Charity, that they seem but the very same Things under different Names: for according to the best explications we have had of Vertue, it is in different respects call'd Moderation or Mediocrity, and doing Good, of which Benevolence is the principal.

An Universal Moderation is Vertue in general; and a moderation of our Affections to the things of the World, is Purity. Again, an universal Benevolence, that's Vertue; and a Benevolence to Mankind, that's Charity: So that as it is the same Water that washes on the *English* and *Spanish* Shores, and from them receives different Names; so it is the same Vertue that makes us love other Men, which

makes us love our selves, and God, and all his Creatures; and that moderates our Affections to all things as well as some. But to pass over this.

II. These are Vertues of large extent, that contain many others in them, and have a very direct and immediate Influence on the Production of many. They are pregnant, they contain many in their Womb.

Charity includes all our Duties to other Men. He that's Charitable, gives to Men what they have not right to, and he will much more give them their own: that is, he that's Charitable, must be Just: And the Man that loves his Brother, will not lie to him, will not deceive and disappoint him; that is, the charitable Man will be faithful.

And he that's loving, will also be liberal, and according to his proportion, be communicative; nor will he give scant measure, sparingly and grudgingly; but out of the abundance of his heart, will fill his hand, and give out to the necessities and conveniencies of others: that is, he will be bountiful.

And this is the Affection that makes Men Courteous and Affable, and of easy Address: they love Mankind, and therefore are universally civil. And how candid is the Charitable Man in his Contructions of Mens Words or Actions? He is not apt to think Evil, nor to put a sinister interpretation on that, of which there may be made a good sense. He will excuse the Action if it be capable, or think it is not so good as it's apprehended; will
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find out a good intention, or no ill one to extenuate a very bad action; or will impute an ill Design to Passion, and not Habit; or if that cannot be neither, yet he will pity and pardon the Man who is so malicious as to design him an injury.

The Charitable Man who is bent upon doing good to all Men, will much more do so to his Parents, and Friends, and Benefactors: that is, he who will do Good where he hath less Obligation, will where there is greater.

And Charity will do no Evil, neither bereave Men of their Lives, nor rob them of their Goods, nor violate their Chastity, nor injure their Reputation; nor so much as desire any thing from them to their hurt.

And how many are the Vertues that Purity contains? Temperance and Chastity are so essential to it, that the opposite is known by the name of Impurity or Uncleanneſs: And the Adulterous and Unchaste, in Scripture, are said to defile and pollute themselves.

Nor is Humility less essential to Purity; indeed all that's opposite to either Pride or Covetousness, belongs to it: For Purity, as I have said, is the due government of our Affections to the things of this World, whether the Pleasures, or the Riches, or the Honours of it.

Thus we see that these are two comprehensive Vertues, they are Constellations; but besides this, they mightily contribute to the increase of Vertue, by disposing us,

3. To the practice of other Vertues which are not comprehended in them: For where

they have not a direct and immediate, they have a remote and oblique influence.

I will mention some few : Faith, and Hope in, and Love to God, and minding Spiritual things. Nothing so much increases our persuasion of the Goodness of God, as Good-Will in our selves. The Man that feels himself inclined to do all good Offices to other Men, and to make them very happy, he will be more easily induced to believe that God will do so.

For this is generally true, That Men will think God to be as they are : And hence is it, That so many Men who are in their Temper peevish and revengeful, and short-spirited, translate their own Humours into their Theology, and represent God like themselves. The Scripture in the 50th Psalm, takes notice of this.

Hence is it that we have had such representations of their Gods from the Heathens, as Drunken, and Lascivious, and Angry ; and indeed they in their Divinity transferr'd all the Evil Passions of Men to their Gods.

And how many Professors of Christianity, who have been Angry, and Proud, and Censorious, and Arbitrary, have describ'd God as Implacable and Exacting, and Cruel, and catching of Advantages to punish. They have been great Assertors of Dominion, unallay'd with Goodness ; and of Arbitrary, Unaccountable Proceedings. They were self-will'd, and peremptory, and unreasonable in their Actings, and they thought God to be so too.

Now,

Now, then is this only allowable to attribute to God what we find in our selves; when that's a Perfection; for that's one way of Man's Knowledge of God, when he ascribes to him the Perfections, which are scatter'd up and down amongst his Creatures. And such is great Love: So then when he feels his own Love to Mankind, to be always the attendant of his best state and greatest happiness; and that when he's at best himself, he wishes and endeavours that others may be in good state too; he hath great reason to believe that God who is infinitely happier and more perfect than he, doth so much more. Especially observing that the more miserable, and weak, and depraved any Men or Angels are, the less inclined to do good.

And when this good Man's Soul goes out into the heartiest desires and endeavours for the greatest Good of Men; and he wishes far more than he can do for them; this lays a firm Foundation of Hope in God, and he cannot but think that he will do all, that he can desire should be done for the benefit of Men.

He knows that Love which makes him weep over a dying Man, if it was in conjunction with Power would give him his Life again; and he believes that God's Love is not less than his; and therefore he hath hopes of a Resurrection.

Again, there's no Man can hope for Heaven so much, as he whose Conversation is in Heaven. Nothing can so much facilitate a Man's Belief, and so fortifie and strengthen his Faith and Hope concerning such a Blessed Condi-

Condition hereafter, as the feeling and being in it in part here.

Now the most of Heaven is Purity and Charity, and he that hath attained to these, he hath Eternal Life begun in him already, and to perswade him there's no such thing, is like perswading a living Man that he doth not live.

And lastly, he that loves Men, and whose Affections are not inordinately carried out to this World, he must love God: that is, if he love these that have so little good; he will sure love Him that's infinitely Good in himself, and the cause of all that good he sees in them; especially when his Love does not run out into other Channels.

III. These two have removed the great impediments of Vertue, to say no more. Assuredly Uncharitableness to Men, and inordinate Love to this World, are the great hindrances of good Life, and the true causes of most of that Irreligion and Wickedness that is in the World.

I need not to prove this, which every Man's reflection on himself, and observation of other Men, will sufficiently do. Let any one consider what hinders the Progress of Religion in his Soul or others, and he will find that it is want of love to Men, and too much love to the World.

Hence is all Irreligion and Impiety towards God. Therefore are Men Atheists or Irreligious, or Superstitious, because they love the World too much, and their Brethren too little: their
Souls

Souls are so drowned in Sensuality, and so sunk into Covetous Desires, that they have no list or vacancy for those Thoughts which would convince them of the Existence of a God ; or, if they cannot but think there is one, yet they regard him not, they can spare no time for his private or publick Worship. Or, if they take up a form of Religion ; 'tis a meer form, without the Life and Soul ; and 'tis for the most part a few Rites, some of the Ceremonious part, a saying so many Prayers, and hearing so many Sermons ; but all this is meer shew : And the reason is, that their Hearts are intangled by Covetous or Ambitious Desires, or enslaved to Sensuality.

I need not say that these are the known Fountains of all that Injustice, that Cozenage, and Oppression, and Calumny, and Falseness, and Cruelty that are amongst Men. Whence is it that one Man cheats and over-reaches another, but because he loves him not ; for none goes about to cheat and deceive, and injure himself ; and why, but because he loves himself.

And why will a Man violate his Conscience, and transgress the Laws of Justice and Equity ? Why will he so vehemently pursue that which he hath no right to, and throw his Brother out of his quiet and just Possessions ; but because he hath an immoderate affection, and an exorbitant appetite to the things of this World ? If he had a just value of them, and a moderate desire after them, he would not in the pursuit after them, do violence to his Principles, or disturb his Brother ; but then every
one

one might live quietly by another.

To conclude this ; what is it that makes Men so openly and prophanely regardless of God, but that they have too great a regard to this World ? Therefore God is not in all their Thoughts , because Riches and Honours fill them. Is not this the cause also, that Men by Perjuries and false Oaths do so prophane and abuse the Sacred Name, that they call God to witness a Lie ? *viz.* They have set their Heart upon Riches, or their Credit is engaged. Were it not for such immoderate Desires, they would not do a thing so unnatural , and to which they have such reluctancy , a thing so monstrously absurd, and indecorous, and senseless, as to call on the God of Knowledg, and Truth, and Justice, to witness and punish a Falshood in themselves.

Again, What is it, that, as Scripture phrases it, makes the Sabbath, which to pure Minds is a delight, to become a weariness ? and that Men say, *When will it be over ?* but worldly-mindedness ? For, as it follows there, *that we may Buy and Sell, and get Gain.* Therefore Men lay their Bibles aside, because they find in them no directions how to grow greatly and suddenly Rich. And they either pray not at all, lest that should take up too much time from their other pursuits ; or else they for a pretence make Prayers, that they might under this colour more securely devour Widows Houses, and the Bread of Orphans.

Thus we have found the great Cause why Men are prophanely Wicked, or Hypocritical in their Religion. They therefore give God
none

none, or at least a heartless Worship, because their Hearts are after their Concupiscence.

And for the other part of our Duty to Men, are not the same the known causes of our neglect of that? What is it that makes Men Lie and Steal, but their Covetousness or Luxury? And is it not brutish Lust that makes them defile their Neighbours Bed, or intices them to any forbidden Embraces? And is it not from want of Love, that they shed Innocent Blood?

To end this particular also. Do not Men therefore bear False Witness against their Neighbour, because they desire his Goods? that is, they have first broken the Tenth Commandment, and that's the true cause why they not only break the Ninth, but indeed all the rest.

And thus I have proved, that Uncharitableness and Impurity are the greatest impediments of Vertue and Religion. Were it not for these Damns, Righteousness would run down like a River, and Goodness like a mighty Stream. Were they not diverted to other Object, Mens Affections would be to God and Vertue.

And the true ground why they are such impediments is, they indispose our Minds, they fill up our Time; whereas it's necessary to a Religious Life, and Vertuous Practice, that we have vacant Time, and free Minds.

Now therefore Charity and Purity, which have removed these great Obstacles, must necessarily promote Religion, and increase Vertue.

Third-

Thirdly; A third thing in which I said the good state of Man's Soul consists, is Peace and Tranquillity.

That it is so, appears from this,

1. That it's every Man's design, it's the universal aim of Mankind: Men of all Ages and Places, of all Nations, Tongues and Languages, of the most different Conditions, and most distant Times, yet agree in this End: This is that which the Rich Man and Poor both seek; and 'tis the common end of both the Philosopher and the Ignorant. Nay, the Religious and Vertuous Man concurs with the Vicious Debauch, in a desire of Peace, and a satisfied Mind.

I might shew particularly how all Men that ever were, have intended this, and how in their different and contrary ways, they have proposed this inward Quiet, as the end of all their Travel and Labour, of all their Attempts and Undertakings. But this would be too large a Digression.

I might also shew, that this is indeed the end of Knowledg, and all the Perfections of the Soul, they naturally tend and lead to it. But

All I shall now add, to shew that this is a considerable part of the good state of the Soul, is,

2. That this inward Quiet of Mind is so necessary, that without it the best condition of Man is but bad; and the worst that can consist with it, is, if not good, yet very tolerable. Imagine a Man as Rich and Honourable as the World

World can make him, and all his Days and Nights swimming away in the softest Sensuality; let his Health be strong and firm, and his Life long; let him be accompanied with a retinue of careful, diligent, loving Servants, and of faithful and affectionate Friends: And, besides all this, suppose his Soul enrich'd with great and rare Knowledg, and endued with all other Perfections that can be separated from Content; this Man in the midst of his Abundance is Poor, if all these do not minister to Peace, and afford him Satisfaction, they leave him empty, and he is in a great degree miserable. If Knowledg it self, the best of all things I have mentioned, if that increase his Sorrow, it also diminishes his Happiness. This one Fly in the Box of precious Ointment, corrupts the whole.

Nor need I to add a Representation of the contrary part for a Quiet Mind, tho' a Man be laden with Reproaches and false Calumnies, tho' he be pinched with Poverty, tho' it be in a sick and crazy Body, and it self furnished with none of the admired Knowledg that so few have, and so many dote upon; yet is not near so unhappy as the other.

I will say no more for the eviction of this, but shew how Purity and Charity conduce to it.

I. In general they do this as they encrease,

I. In Knowledg and Wisdom.

II. Religion and Vertue.

III. In particular, they are opposite to the great causes of our Trouble and Disquiet, and
by

by a very direct and immediate influence, cause Peace and Satisfaction of Mind to follow them, as Light doth the Sun.

I. I have already shewn how these two tend to increase Knowledge, and to make us more wise; and shall I need now to say how that tends to Man's quiet and peaceable condition? He hath considered but ill, and understands little, who knows not that clear Knowledge and right Judgment is the Parent of Quiet, and that calmness and a composure of Thoughts, are the Issues of good Understanding.

Who hath observed himself and the World so little, as not to be able to resolve the far greatest part of the disquiet of their Minds into Ignorance and Error, into want of Judgment and Inconsideration, into Folly and Unreasonableness?

If it be not unnecessary for me to enlarge here, I will give instances in one or two cases.

1. The Ignorance of God.
2. Of natural Causes, what Tempests do they raise in the Soul of Man?

He that knows not the Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness of God, how unsatisfied is he in the administration of things? How full of fears and solicitude? How apprehensive of Danger from every thing, and of Destruction from God. The Man that understands not the Goodness of God can be at no rest: if he be ignorant or mistaken there, he wants the
only

only sure Foundation of a firm and lasting Peace.

And the Man that's ignorant of Nature, he's apt by his imagination to muster up the Clouds, and set those thin Vapours in *Battalia*: he's struck with horror when he hears the Thunder, and a flash of Lightning puts him besides the use of his Reason.

In short, shews nothing in the World so ordinary, but it amuses and disquiets him: but if any thing unusual happen, he's then at his Wits end, and presently fancies some signal mischief portended. Not a Star can be whirl'd out of his Circle in the Heavens, nor a Fish mistake his way in the Waters, but presently he foretells a publick Calamity.

Nay, if all fail, his own Dreams, the broken ends of thoughts, the tumultuary and fortuitous concurrence of wild Imaginations shall minister to his disquiet. And is not all this the manifest effect of silliness? Is not Ignorance of Nature the reason of all this unquietness in the minds of the Vulgar?

I will not give any more Instances, but leave room for your thoughts to expatiate in all the rest, wherein this appears; since our Ignorance and Folly are the Causes of so much disquiet, Knowledge must remove it: all frightening Spectrum's will fly from that, as Shadows do before the Light.

And therefore if Purity and Charity add to our Knowledge, as I have shewn at large they do, they by that lay a Foundation for our quiet.

2. Add to this, secondly, They increase Vertue and Religion ; and these are ordinarily accompanied with Peace and Serenity. He that lives in a due becoming Regard of God, and discharge of his Duty, that behaves himself fitly in his Relations; who hath well considered what he ought to do, and acts according to his Judgment universally ; who is good to others as well as himself ; who keeps himself within the bounds that Nature and Reason, that wise and good Laws have set, and always aims at the best and greatest Good of himself and the World : This Man must needs be at peace with his own Thoughts, and satisfied in himself. He's free from the vexation and disquiet, from the tortures of Regret, and the anguish of Remorse, which is so often and so naturally consequent on Irreligion and Prophaneness or Hypocrisie, on Debauchery and vicious Practice.

It's a Truth stands written in indelible Characters, shews there is no peace to the Wicked. So long as there is a Conscience in Men, this must be true, whose Office it is, so to accuse and condemn wicked and irreligious Practice; as to excuse and allow vertuous and good Life.

Hence we may easily infer, That these two Vertues in the Text, which I have shewn, do cleanse our Hearts, and purifie our Lives from Wickedness ; do by this make way for satisfaction, and prepare an habitation for Peace, which only dwells in holy and purged Souls.

3. These two are opposite to the most of the causes of our Disquiet, and remove the far greatest

est Disturbers of our Peace, which will appear by a particular induction of them, and by representing the state of that Man's Mind, which is pure and loving.

When we look abroad into the World, we find all places full of Discontents and Complaints; they are both in City and Country, in Societies and Solitudes, and there's no sort of Men but they live in vexation and disquiet. They ascend the Thrones of Princes, and dwell in the stately Palaces of Nobles; these are the Rust that eats into the Treasures of the Rich; they are the Worm that smites the green flourishing Gourd, under whose shadow the Voluptuous delighted himself: They are incorporate with the Dignities and Honours that are the aim of the Ambitious.

Nor is Trouble and Unquietness only the Companion of Riches, and Honour, and Pleasure: but these are found wrapt up in Rags, and dwelling in poor Cottages.

In short, they are the Scholar's Study, the Trades-man's Shop, the Souldier's Camp; they Travel and Trade with the Merchant, and stay with him that keeps at home: Neither Birth nor Place, Wealth nor Poverty, Ignorance nor Learning secures Men from inward Troubles.

But, Whence is all this? Is Man born to all the Trouble he endures? Is this the Inheritance that is entail'd on him by the great Author of Nature? How then shall we plead for the Goodness of God in making Man? For, if these vexations be fatal and inevitable, they justify that saying, *that it's better to Die than Live, and he*

who is not Born is in better condition than either. But every one will surely be forward to vindicate the goodness of his Maker ; and that I may briefly clear it from this imputation ;

First, I do acknowledg that many are the disquiets of the Mind of Man ; and whoever takes a view of the Infinite Troubles that Mankind endures, they must look with an Eye of Pity, and compassionate their Case.

But *Secondly*, I do also assert with great assurance, That the far greatest part of Man's Troubles arise, as from his own Folly and Sin in general, so particularly from inordinate Affection, and irregular Appetite, and unreasonable Desire, from malicious Hatred, vehement Anger, or want of Charity.

And therefore God must not be censured, but Man blamed. Therefore also Purity and Charity free us from most of our Trouble.

More particularly, Go we to the House of the Ambitious Man, and ask how Discontent came in thither : for tho' he hath all that Nature and Reason would teach him to desire, yet he's not quiet : and the only cause is, he is inordinately desirous of Honour, he over-values himself and his Merits ; and thinks himself ill dealt with, if he be not preferred before almost all others. No praise is sufficient for his worth, no reward can equal it.

Again, The rich Man that hath Goods laid up for a Thousand years : tho' he hath much more than ever he can use or enjoy ; yet he rises early, and sits up late, and eats the Bread of
care,

care, with this only design, to encrease his Store. He is infinitely Sollicitous, first to get, and then to keep a vast Estate; when he neither knows for whom, nor considers why: that is, an immoderate, unaccountable Thirst after Money, is that which fills his Days and Nights with unquietness and vexation; makes him, that he can neither serve nor enjoy his God, nor his Friends, nor himself. Enquire into the troubler of the Peace of his Mind, and it will be discover'd to be Covetousness; all that Anxiety and Carking Carefulness that is there, comes from this.

This Torments him before he gets an Estate, and this Wracks him when he hath it, and Tortures him if he lose it. His desire to be Rich, will suffer him to enjoy nothing till that be satisfied; and that never is, but grows with his Estate.

Crescit indulgens sibi dirus Hydrops.

When he hath enough he knows it not, but still desires more; and then his fear of losing what he hath, adds to his disquiet. How unexpressible are the infinite Sollicitudes and Anxieties, the tormenting Cares and wracking Fears, that are all the off-spring of Covetousness?

I will forbear to mention any more instances of this sort, which every Man's experience will sufficiently furnish him with. There's no Man so little an Observer, but he sees that most Men's minds are fill'd with Trouble and Unquietness; and there's none so ill a Philosopher,

pher, but he can give an account of this from inordinate affection to this World : Because Men either love that which is not good, or over-love that which is ; because they desire without reason and bounds ; hope without ground, and fear as vainly as they hope ; therefore do they live in perpetual Disquiets.

Their Desires are so boundless, that they can never be satisfied, the World is too little to do that ; and their Hopes are so vain, and their Expectations so great, that they alway meet with Disappointment.

Men for the most part either desire that which is evil and hurtful , or too much of that which is good , that is, more than is useful ; or expect more good than they ever find. And these are in general, the Springs of the greatest part of the Troubles of their Minds.

If Men did not inordinately desire Honour, and set too great a value by far on it, would they with so much pains and trouble prosecute it ? If they consider'd with how little judgment the greatest part of Men either commend or discommend ; and that Honour is only the approbation of other Men ; they would not be so restless in their pursuit of it, nor so unquiet if they mist of it.

Again ; If the Sensualist did not unreasonably dote on his Corporeal Gratifications, he would never so pine for them before, nor be so sottishly sad afterward. He sets too great a value on them, and from hence it is, that he passes by so many Dangers, and neglects so great Difficulties, and is so restless and unquiet

quiet in his Thoughts, both before and after his Enjoyments.

And the Covetous Man's Cares, and Fears, and Desires, that will not suffer him to eat or sleep in quiet; neither serve the necessities of Nature, nor do the works of Religion; neither serve God, nor do good to Men, nor please himself; they all arise from immoderate affection to more.

I need not instance in the unquietness of the malicious and Revengeful Man: his is the torment of Devils and Damned Spirits: and is not that manifestly from uncharitableness and want of Love?

That I may come to an end of this particular, as *Epicurus* said of our Desires, so I say of our Troubles; *there are some that are natural and necessary; some that are natural, but not necessary; and some that are neither the one nor the other.*

When I say natural, I mean that they have their foundation in Nature, they arise from the very nature of Man and Things. And when I say necessary, I speak both with respect to their Cause and Effect; that is, they are the Product of a very necessary Efficient, that is not in the power of a free Agent to alter, and there is some good end that cannot be attained without them.

Now the first are those that arise from some real and great Evil, or the loss of some Good, which we cannot but be apprehensive of: such are those Troubles that arise from Consciousness of Sin, which are caused by pain, or the loss of a Friend, &c.

The second sort are those Troubles which arise from some lesser and more doubtful evils, such as have as much good joined with them; such as will not really hinder a wise Man from doing and enjoying as much good as he did: but notwithstanding what hath happened, he may be as wise, and vertuous, and happy, as he was.

In short, those Troubles, which it's in the power of Liberty, well used, to prevent or remove.

Of the third sort are all those that are founded in meer Imagination, but have no foundation in things: if it were not for ill reasoning, and false opinion, they would never be. And of this number are the most and greatest part of our Troubles: for if Men would set the same bounds to their Desires that Nature and Reason do, they would then say they had enough; whereas now they are ever unsatisfied, because Imagination and not Nature, Fantasy and not Reason, beget their Desires.

And therefore was it so well observed of *Epicurus*, as I remember *Seneca* quotes him for it in one of his Epistles; *Si ad naturam vires, nunquam eris Pauper; si ad opinionem, nunquam Dives. Exiguum Natura desiderat, Opinio immensum.*

And *Epicetus* speaks clearly to this, when he asserts so roundly, *τὰ πράγματα, ἀλλὰ ὡς ἐν τῇ πραγματικῇ ὑπολήψει τὰ πράγματα τὰς ἀνθρώπων.* And therefore saith he, it is not Death, but the Phantasy and Imagination that we have of it, and that a false one for the
most

most part, which makes us so fearful of it.

Undoubtedly, neither Poverty, nor Disgrace, nor Sickness, nor Death would so much afflict us, if we did not encrease their evil by our own imagination. This is that which makes what's really good, appear bad; and this makes that which is evil, ten times worse than it is.

From this that hath been said, appears, that the most and greatest of our Troubles arise from inordinate Affection, immoderate and unreasonable Appetites. Every one will be satisfied in the Truth of this Discourse, that will observe either himself or other Men, and will say with me, that Pride and Covetousness, that Lust and Malice are the causes of the greatest Disquiets in the mind of Man.

I will only add this for a further eviſtion, that where Purity and Charity dwell, there's Peace and Quiet; where inordinate Lusts, and vain Desires, and groundless Hope are taken away, how calm and composed is that Soul? It fears no Alarms from without, nor is discomposed when evil Tidings come; when one Messenger of bad News treads on the heels of another, yet with a steady firmness it continues unmoved.

Tell such a Man that his Estate is gone, he yet saith, *he hath enough for the ends of Wisdom and Vertue, sufficient to minister to the wants and delights of Nature*: And if he be reproach'd and undervalued, he considers that men are apt to mistake, that 'tis impossible for him to prevent it: if the ill they say of him be true, he deserves it; if false, 'tis their fault and not his,

his, he cannot hinder it ; 'tis common to many, and it cannot take from him the joy of a good Conscience, nor can hinder his Happiness. And when all his lower Faculties are subject to his Reason, when Rebellious Appetites are brought into subjection to Conscience ; and his Judgment hath got a perfect Victory over all corporeal Inclinations ; how much Peace and Quiet doth he enjoy ? so much, that if we may believe experienced Men, 'tis a far greater satisfaction to deny, than to gratify such desires.

On this account it is, that the Philosophers alway prescribed this method to Quietness and Tranquillity of Mind, *to pare off all superfluous desires, to moderate their affections, to restrain appetite.* And if we add to what hath been said, Charity and Love, which cools all heats that Malice and Envy, or intemperate Anger had caused ; there's nothing can be more serene and calm, more quiet and peaceable than the Mind of such a Man.

How is such a one out of the reach of disturbance ? His Soul is mounted aloft, and none of the things that only infest them that grovel in the Earth, or dwell in the lower Regions, where are Clouds and Rains, Storms and Tempests can come at him.

He's in Heaven by Purity and Charity ; and so sees all these things under his Feet, which disquiet the Earthly-minded, or the Airy Souls. He is not Rich, nor doth he care whether he be or not, and his indifferency keeps him quiet. He has no great, or no good Name perhaps, he's contemn'd and censured ;
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it satisfies him to approve himself to God and his own Mind, and is not solicitous what others say or think of him.

He is not acted by brutish and ungovernable Passion, but by an even and steady Reason. The Furies of Revenge and Hatred have no power over his Charitable, Loving Soul. This, in short, is the State of the Man who hath subdued Inordinacy, and whose Soul is acted by Love and Goodness.

And from all this appears, how much these two excellent Qualities of Purity and Charity conduce to the Quiet and Peace of our Mind: which how desirable it is, and how great a part of that good state, I need not now say.

3. Purity and Charity are therefore good to Man, because they are full of Pleasure, and very delightful.

I have already shewn how beneficial and advantageous they are to Humane Nature, both to the Body and Soul of Man, in diverse other respects; and now I proceed to shew that they are pleasant as well as profitable; and that they do not only serve us in our other Interests, but also minister to Joy, and procure us Pleasure.

It is the usual reproach of Religion and Vertue, that they bereave us of all delights, and fill us with sadness; and when we once become Profelytes to Holiness, we must then abandon all the Pleasures of this World, and Sigh and Weep out our days. How untrue this Charge is, they know, who understand and practise the true Religion; however
others

others that have mistaken it, or live it not may think.

But yet I cannot but wonder, that any Man should think so unworthily of God, the wise and good Author of Nature, as that he should oblige Men to a state of Life that's unnatural, and to which he hath so unalterable an aversation, as he hath to continual sorrow and unquietness.

This imputation therefore I wholly ascribe to Mens ignorance of, and unacquaintance with real Religion; they mistake Superstition and Formality for it; they put Melancholy and Mopingness in its place, and have made Anger and Sorrow the only expressions of great Goodness. They never consider Reason, nor Nature, nor the more pleasant Passions; but account it a principal part of their Religion, to deny themselves in the renouncing all these. And this is the true cause why a Religious Man must be barred from all enjoyment, and be allowed no Pleasure.

But they who do not account Religion contrary, but agreeable to Reason; nor Vertue destructive but perfective of Nature: they must think that good Life will be accompanied with Pleasure and Delight; and that the ways of Wisdom are ways of Pleasantness, and all her paths are Peace; that Joy is sprung up for the Righteous, and Gladness for the Upright in Heart.

I shall now endeavour to shew how these two principal parts of Religion in the Text, (which are seldom or never parted from the rest,)

rest,) conduce to Pleasure, and are followed with Joy.

If they did not lead to this, I should greatly suspect that they were not so good as they are thought to be; for I account Joy to be a principal ingredient in Man's greatest happiness; and therefore whatsoever tends to a state of Sorrow, that leads to Misery. Hence is it, that the state of the Blessed after this Life, is in Scripture called a state of Joy; *Enter ye into the Joy of your Lord*: and on the contrary, the condition of the Damned is described to us by *weeping and wailing, &c.*

And indeed antipathy to Sorrow, and inclination to Joy are so natural to Man, that he must cease to be what he was made, before he can forbear to flee from the one, and to follow the other. Sense of Pleasure and Pain are at the first discover'd in little Infants, as soon as they come into the World, perhaps as soon as there is Life they have this sense; long before they leave their Mothers Womb, they make some expressions of these perceptions; and that which begun so early, must continue to the last: It began with our Beings, and will not end till they do, that is, it will continue with us for ever.

Indeed, according as our Understanding and Reason, and other faculties, according as our Designs alter, so will our Pleasures: That will cease to please the Man, which was delightful to the Child. But still all Ages have their Pleasures, and all Conditions and Differences of Men are endeavouring after Joy.

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This is one thing in which all Mankind is united, even the mistaken Religionist, that in-joins himself to live a Life of perpetual Sorrow, yet he doth it in order to Joy and Delight.

I am not therefore shy of owning the *Epicurean* Doctrine thus far, as to say, that Pleasure is the result of all; 'tis the issue and upshot of all the good we do, and all vertuous Designs have this in their aim and tendency: and all the things we call good to us, have this effect, to please us.

And therefore I will not forbid, but advise and perswade Men to seek after Pleasures, provided they be the greatest and most constant and lasting. That which I blame Men for, is, not that they are in an earnest pursuit of Pleasure; but they foolishly indulge themselves some sorry, sickly, dying, unnatural Pleasures, whereby they are deprived of those that are greater and better, that are pure and endless.

They that concur with *Epicurus*, as to their end, and place their chiefest good in Pleasure, they should also do well to hearken to him, when he prescribes the means to this end, and tells them that Vertue and Wisdom are necessary to it. It's a famous saying of his, *ἐστιν ἡδὺς ζῆν ἀνευ τῆς φρονίμως*.

Having then said thus much concerning Pleasure that is natural to us, and a necessary part of our happiness, I shall not need to prove, that is good to Man which brings with it Pleasure; for that is a great Good which all Men desire, that which is the Perfection and
End,

End, the top and consummation of all Vertue, and all else that's good.

That which is the constant attendant, and sure and greatest reward of every good action; that which is the Rest, the Haven of Souls, which when they once arrive at, they are fully satisfied and acquiesce, they aim at nothing more than the increase and continuance of their enjoyment; that must necessarily be thought a great Good.

But I will use no more words to convince them who doubt this; for I cannot hope to make it more plain by Discourse, than Sense hath made it, that Pleasure is good. And if they have been so far imposed on by the cavils of a subtle Disputant, as to doubt of what they feel; or, because they meet with the complaints that morose and melancholick Men make against Pleasure, will deny their own Sense: I have no hopes to perswade them by my Discourse.

This I suppose will be sufficient to say, That I here onely speak of those Pleasures that have a Foundation in Reason and Nature, that are Innocent and Harmless; that do not end in Pain and Sorrow, but continue and increase for ever; that are the Rewards which Nature gives to good Actions: and that these are hugely good to the Soul of Man, will be doubted by none, who hath either Sense or Reason.

And yet when I have said all this, I deny not but there are Pleasures, which arise from ignorance & mistake, from folly & evil custom, which are not agreeable to Reason or Nature, which
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are the very bane of Souls. But these as they proceed from unreasonableness and unnatural practices; so they are of short continuance, and onely prepare the way for Sorrow and Pain, and end in Trouble and Unquietness.

These are they, of which the great Master of Pleasure so much forewarn'd his Disciples. But how much sorer these are hurtful and pernicious to us, the other are as beneficial and advantageous.

For to pass by other considerations, they engage us mightily to repeat those good Actions whereby they were procured. Nothing lays a stronger or surer Obligation on Man than Pleasure; it is the most forcible inducement to him, to begin, or persevere in any undertaking that can be: And if it be perpetually delightful, 'tis the surest sign, and best account that we can have, that it is good. For whatsoever is alway pleasant to a Man, that alway seems good to him, and that which he constantly thinks to be Good, he must say is so; for no Argument can do more than alway perswade a Man, that a Thing is, or is not.

This I therefore make the grand difference betwixt good and evil Pleasures, that the one is lasting, the other transient, and ends in disquiet. Those that continue alway, the sense of which abides with a Man, after the object is gone, and the actions are over, which are delightful in reflection and review, as well as they were in the action, those are good Pleasures.

And

And it would be a very good direction to Man in Life, that he should do those actions which afford him a perpetual Pleasure, and never failing Delight; which when he consider'd them after, would not cause regret or trouble. And so much to shew both that, and what Pleasure is good; and that that therefore which procures it must be so.

I now proceed to shew that Purity and Charity are procurers of the greatest, and best, and most lasting Pleasure which the Soul of Man can have.

In general, whatsoever causes a sense of present good, or an apprehension of what's certain, or but probable, whether past or future, and increases the motion of Life, that causes Pleasure; and according as that Good we feel or apprehend, is greater, and the sense or apprehension of it, is quicker, and clearer, stronger, and purer, and more lasting, that Pleasure we have is greater and better; if it do not lay the Foundation of Pain and Trouble, nor do us harm in any kind, 'tis Innocent. If it lead to further and greater Pleasure, and better us, 'tis beneficial and useful. If it be consequent on actions that are natural, that is, which flow from the Principles of our Nature, and tend to perfect it, it's natural. If the good apprehended, be truly so, and as great as was imagined, it's also rational.

Now, as I discourse of some of the particular ways in which Charity and Purity procure us Delight, I shall at the same time make it appear, That this delight is not pernicious, but innocent and harmless; nor only, that it doth no ill,

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but

but much good ; that it's agreeable to Nature and no ways unsuitable to it. And lastly, that it's no imaginary or fictitious thing, but real, and hath its Foundation in Truth. And that which is thus qualified, hath all that should make a Pleasure desirable and good.

I have two things to do ;

I. To shew how Charity and Purity conduce to Pleasure.

II. That the Pleasure which they bring, hath these qualifications.

1. I might make this appear, by shewing that the greatest and best Pleasure is consequent on Wisdom and Knowledge, on Vertue and Goodness, on Content and Satisfaction, to which, I have shewn at large, these two greatly contribute. But that would engage me in too long a Discourse, and which I think would be needless, because it is so obvious to every ones observation.

I will suggest something more near and close to the notion of Pleasure I have laid down in these particulars.

I. These are themselves a very great and present Good.

II. They also help us to apprehend what's absent, either what's past, or to come ; for they raise in us an expectation of a future good, as well as cause us to remember what was.

III. They

III. They remove the causes of our greatest Troubles. And,

IV. These two excellent Qualifications make us think that to be good, which in reality is so, and which Souls unfurnish'd with them imagine to be Evil. Now, since no Man is delighted with that which he doth not think to be good, that which increases and rectifies his knowledg of what's good, that makes way for more and greater delight. And that these two make many things be thought good, which to an Uncharitable or Worldly Man appears evil, I shall shew presently.

1. If we call that good which makes us so; and of all goods, if those be best, which are most beneficial to the best part of us, our Souls; as nothing can be good or evil to us, but as it refers to them, then we must conclude these two to be greatly good.

Again, if that be best, which is most near and immediate, most firm and lasting, then these two also are in the first rank of things that are good. They are the best and greatest goods, and of which the Soul hath, and must have the clearest and deepest sense, and therefore must cause the greatest Pleasure.

I shall not need to argue these things largely, only will shew in three particulars, the advantages that these have above most other good things.

I. Others refer, and are subservient to these.

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II. Others

II. Others are remote and extrinsecal, these are immediate and inward.

III. Most others are uncertain, and without the reach of our Power, and transient; these are more sure, and within our Power, and lasting.

1. Besides what I have said, I will now add this, that all things are so far good to Man, as they bring or continue him in a good state of Mind. Now to be justly affected to things, and to have Thoughts full of Love, is a principal part of that good state of Soul; and whatever occasions the loss of these, in whole, or in part, is on that account hurtful and pernicious. Whatever tends to make a Man inordinate or uncharitable, that is so far mischievous to him.

I refer the full eviction of this, to what I have said before; and supposing it proved, will infer, that those must be thought the greatest goods, which are the end to which others tend; for the end is always better than the means.

2. These are near and inward. They are so not only in comparison with the commonly call'd external goods, the goods of Fortune, but with those of the Body. The Soul is nearest it self, and therefore it hath the quickest sense of its own condition. Sometimes it is so taken up in the Thoughts of it self, and its own state, that it hath no feeling of the Body's. And if, according to the wisest Judgments, the sense of bodily Health and Strength be one of the
great-

greatest Pleasures ; then much more the Souls sense of its own good plight , and of the greatness of its power, its vigour and activity must be the greatest that is. If the Bodies nearness to the Soul, cause so clear a sense of its good, its greater nearness to it self, must cause a clearer of what's good to it.

Here are both the things, which where they concur, certainly cause great Pleasure, viz. a great good, and a clear sense of it. The Soul in this case cannot chuse but take notice ; in others it may be diverted, and made not to mind. Men would be greatly pleas'd, *Bona si sua morint* ; but here they are almost forced, they are, as it were, necessitated to observe, they have a secret sense of their own welfare, their Health and Strength, which cannot well be separated from them.

Other good things are at a distance, and make not so strong an impression as those which are so immediate and inward, which are indeed the Health and Strength of Souls. For then the Soul is in an excellent Condition, when Reason rules over all the affections to the things of this World ; when every Desire and Passion is subject to Understanding, and govern'd by Judgment, and bears proportion to the real goodness of things.

And then also is the Soul in strength and vigour, then is it full of action, when its Designs are Love and Goodness. How healthful are those Souls that are quite rid of all the Diseases of inordinate , exorbitant Passions ? And how strong are they, when they cannot be overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

And when they are thus guided by Reason, and acted by Love, what secret Rejoycing and Triumph must there be, to feel so much of Power, and themselves in so good a Plight? These do cause a quick and clear Sense; whereas the Sense which ariseth from external and remote Goods, is more faint and languishing.

And therefore it's observable, that there is no so great Pleasure or Pain, as that is which arises from the Soul's Reflection on it self and its own Acts: If upon a Review it discover its Folly, and want of Judgment, and that it acts unreasonably and wickedly, its fill'd with the Anguish of Remorse, which is the greatest of those Pains the mind of Man is capable of.

But if it discover Wisdom and Vertue, the Principles of its Action, and that its Actions are good and vertuous, then it receives a Satisfaction too great for the whole World to give, or to take away. Nothing so full of Pleasure to a man, as the Approbation of his Conscience; and that he cannot fail of, when his Affections to this World are under Government, and accountable, and when he is on Designs of doing Good universally; that is, when he is Pure and Charitable.

I will add but this one Observation more, and conclude this Particular: 'tis this; That all other more remote and external good things, such as Riches, &c. do therefore please us, because they signifie to us, that we have a greater Power, and make Action more easie to us.

Therefore Men are so pleased with Money, because that enables to do such and such things, which without it they could not. And on that account

account Honour is so pleasant, because it confirms Man in a good Opinion of himself, makes him think he's Good, because others say so ; and also gives him an Opportunity of doing Good.

But these more extrinſick Arguments are not comparable to immediate Preſence, nor can they move as ſenſe doth ; and though they give a greater opportunity of acting, yet unleſs we lay hold on it, and unleſs our Actions be guided by Underſtanding, and flow from Charity, 'twill be a Foundation of Miſchief and Trouble to us.

Thus then theſe are no certain ſignifications of Good, nor ſure cauſes of Pleaſure, in no degree comparable to Purity and Charity, which cauſe a ſenſe of Good, which puts us out of all doubt, and ſets us beyond Danger of Miſtake.

Riches and Honours, and the Pleaſures that ariſe from corporal Gratifications, may prove harmful to us ; but to be charitably minded, and to have the maſtery of our Deſires, and all Paſſions in order ; theſe are eternally and immutably Good, and therefore an ever-flowing Spring of pureſt Delight, and unmixt, uninterrupted Pleaſure. I add,

3. That theſe are Goods within our Power, and laſting ; and therefore afford us the greateſt and moſt conſtant Delights.

It is obſervable, that nothing is ſo pleaſing to a man, as what he himſelf doth, and the acquiſitions of his own Industry and Diligence. Now there's nothing a Man hath ſo much power over, as his Actions, nor any thing he can ſo

much do by himself; and the Dispositions and Habits of his Mind are consequent on these, and depend wholly on them.

It's more in a mans power to be Wise and Good, than to be Rich and Honour'd: The first depends upon a mans management of himself; but these on other Causes, and other men's Opinions, which are not in his Power.

I need not add, that these are more durable, and of greater continuance than other things, that depend on more, and those very contingent and uncertain Causes; and therefore the Pleasure they give, is more constant and lasting.

The Sum of this Consideration is, That these two Graces of Charity and Purity are excellently Good, because they are final and ultimate, to which others refer; because they are durable and lasting; because they are certain, and more within our Power, and do not so much depend on other Causes; and then being so immediate and near to us, that they are Objects of our sense, they cannot fail to yield us a full Satisfaction, and to cause a great and continuing Pleasure.

2. They do not only afford us Pleasure whilst they are present, but afterward the Remembrance of them is pleasant. Nothing so delightful to man, as to think he hath been doing Good; and that notwithstanding all the allurements he hath had from this World, yet he hath kept himself Pure and Chaste, and he hath not been prevail'd with to yield to any unlawful Embraces.

When

When he can in his Thoughts run over the many Conquests he hath made over Riches, and Honour, and Sensuality, and how in all assaults his Reason hath kept the Field, his Faith and Charity have overcome; this is matter of Triumph, and ineffable Delight.

This is one way which *Epicurus* taught his Disciples that they might be pleas'd, To remember their Goods that are past: and indeed 'tis almost all the Pleasure of which Old Men are capable.

But all Goods will not give this Pleasure, but rather disquiet us after they are gone; only the good use of our selves, vertuous Resolves and Performances, and especially the Acts of Charity and Benevolence; these are not only pleasant whilst they are, but afterwards the remembrance of them is full of Delight.

Nor yet is this all the Pleasure we have from them, for they fill us with lively and good Hopes. The loving Soul feels it self in so excellent a State, that it knows certainly this must be the State of God himself, that he must love, and then he must love those that are so like him. Besides, he knows that Love to men is the most effectual way to engage their Love to Him. No Man can lightly hate him that loves him; and by this means he's fill'd with the joys of Hope: the probable expectation that it shall go well with him amongst Men, and in this World, is pleasant to him; But the Perswasion he hath of the Love of God, and the Happiness of Heaven, this is Joy unspeakable.

3. They have removed the Causes of our greatest Troubles. And for this I Appeal to all
Mens

Mens Experience, whether the Opposites to these two, with the Consequents on them, be not the Fountains of the most, and greatest of the Troubles of the Soul of Man.

What greater Enemies to Pleasure can there be, than the carking Cares, the Infinite Anxiety and Sollicitude of Covetousness? The Storms and Tempests of Ambition and Pride? The mad unreasonable Brutishness of Sensuality? And then hath Hell it self greater Torments than Rage and Malice are to the Souls where they dwell? Or can any thing more disquiet and torture a Man, than that Passion of Devils, Envy? Add to these, Regret and Remorse for evil and unaccountable acting, and you have made Hell.

Now Purity and Charity have driven away all these Furies; they have dispossessed us of these Devils, which so much tormented us, and fill'd us with an excellent Spirit, a Spirit of Wisdom and Love.

4. They add to our Pleasure by increasing our Knowledge of what's Good.

Things that are Good, unless we think them so, will not cause Pleasure: Now these two make us know and think many Things Good, which, without their help, we should not.

Purity, or the Moderation of our Affections to this World, makes us Know, that a moderate Estate is commonly better than a great one; and Poverty in some Cases better than either. That to be justly valued, is better than to have more Honour than we deserve; and in some Cases to be Reproached, is better than both. That Temperance and Abstinence is bet-
ter

ter than sensual Excesses ; and hard Labour, than Ease.

These and such like are his Opinions, which he hath come to, by moderating his Affections by Reason, and valuing Things according to their real Usefulness : and therefore he is pleas'd to have a little Estate, or none at all, to be honoured or reproached, &c.

Again, The Charitable Man, he that hath Universal good Will, accounts that Good which is so to others, though he himself hath no share in it ; and so can be pleas'd with another Man's Welfare, which an uncharitable and envious Soul is tormented with.

For this Man is selfish, and only thinks that Good, which is beneficial to his particular Interest, and consequently is only pleased with that : but when Charity possesses it self of the Soul, it makes it think all that Good, which is so to any others, though himself be not Partaker of it.

One of the greatest Enemies to our Pleasure, that I know, is Selfishness : when a Mans Mind is so wholly taken up with, and his Thoughts confined to his own particular private Interest, that he hath no Regard to other Mens. He can only rejoyce at the Good that befalls himself, and is commonly troubled and vexed to see others prosper.

Whereas the Man whose Heart is enlarged by Charity, to mind other Mens Matters, and desire their Welfare, is not only pleased when it goes well with himself, but with them also. Nay, he's delighted at the Prosperity of other Men, though himself hath no share in it : so instrumental is Love to Pleasure. I

I now proceed to shew, that these two excellent Graces are honourable : For I would use all Arguments to perswade to Things so necessary and so excellent.

And I know there is in all Men a natural Desire of Honour, they would have the Approbation of others, and do very much acquiesce and rest satisfied, when there is a Concurrence of other Mens Judgments with their own.

Which natural Desire, by the way, shews, That every Man ought to have some Regard to the Judgments of others ; that he is not to be Regardless of what they think or say. 'Tis true, he must first and chiefly be swayed by his own Judgment, but he must also take other Mens into Consideration ; especially if it be the Sense of Mankind, or of the wisest and best of Men, it ought to be of great Weight with him.

I also consider, That Religion suffers very much on this Account, because it is commonly reputed as wholly Unserviceable to the ends of Honour. It's accounted Reproachful and Ignominious to be Religious : though in truth, the Practice of Religion is the Way to Glory and Reputation ; and an irreligious Life ends in Shame and Disgrace.

That I may, therefore, vindicate Religion from this Aspersion, and make it appear more desirable, I will briefly shew how honourable it is in these two principal Parts.

That these two Divine Qualities are greatly Honourable, will be made evident by an Appeal to the Esteem, that both Mankind generally, and in particular, the Wisest Men have of,

1. Them

1. Them that are Pure and Charitable, though destitute of all other Perfections, that are usually cry'd up so much. And,

2. Of them that have all other Things, but want these.

1. I refer my self to the Judgment of Men, whether they have not a secret Veneration and Esteem for those that have neither Riches, nor high Places, nor Opportunities of gratifying their Inclinations; if they be neither Violent nor Unreasonable in their Desires after them, nor yet senseless of, and averse from them, but seek them in their Place and Order, according to their real Goodness and Usefulness, and the Probability of attaining them.

Though Men have not great Places, if they have truly great Minds, they are esteemed: and if they have not abundance of Wealth, yet if they have enlarged Hearts, and do Good with what they have, we honour them.

And those are Men of Esteem, who restrain and govern their Desires of those Pleasures which are Evil and Hurtful, or unattainable. Not he that pleases himself, but other Men, is valued.

But let us not only take away those external Goods, but the internal also; and strip Purity and Charity of all the Perfections of the Body, nay, and Endowments of the Mind too, as much as can be: yet these two left alone, will secure a Man a good Reputation amongst Men.

Suppose a Man, deformed in his Body, and ignorant in his mind, unacquainted with Arts and Sciences, and unskill'd in the Tongues; nay, which is worse, in many Points mistaken, only he understands so much as will moderate his Love to this World, and give him a just value of things in it; he hath Knowledg enough to engage him to Charity, and to direct it. This Man is the Object of Honour and Esteem.

Though his Knowledg be little, yet if it rule his Affections, and if he be ready to communicate and dispense that which he hath, he is highly valued.

In short, the Man that hath his Affections under the Government of Reason, that is Innocent and doth good with what he hath, this Man is truly honoured; we have all a secret and great value for him. This will appear more plain if,

2. We consider the others in Separation from these.

Not all the Riches of the Earth, possess'd by one man, if he be covetous, proud, if unjust, or uncharitable, can purchase him a good Name. He may (though Conscience will not always suffer that neither) applaud and hug himself; but Men will not speak, or (I am sure) not think well of him. And though he be read in all the Learned Authors, and understand the Mysteries of Nature and Divinity too; Though he be not ignorant of, nor Heterodox in one Article of Faith, yet if he have a Mind that's impure, an irregular Will, and inordinate Affections to this World; if he be not just, or not charitable, he is not only in Gods, but in Mens Account, *as sounding Brass, and a tinkling Cymbal.*

Cymbal. They look on him as useleſs or miſchievous, and ſo cannot love, though they may fear him: and where they do not love, they do not honour him, unleſs we may be ſaid to honour Devils.

Thus then, though all the Goods of Fortune, and all the Perfections of Body and Mind concur in one Man, yet if they be ſeparated from Purity and Charity, they do not all make him an Object of Honour.

We ſuſpect the wiſe and deſigning Man, we admire the Scholar, we fear the Rich and Potent; but we only love the Pure and Charitable: that is, we give the greateſt, if not the only true Honour to ſuch a Man.

If Love be either all, or the chiefeſt Ingredient in the beſt Honour, 'tis certainly given to the Man who's Pure and Charitable. This Man is moſt loved whilſt he lives, and is moſt lamented when he dies, and moſt remembred after Death.

Perhaps in life-time Men dare not but ſhew more reſpect to the Rich Covetous man, or to the Ambitious Potent Man, or to the Crafty-deſigning Man: but they have inwardly more reſpect for the Man who is duly affected to this World, who's Charitable and Beneficent, Communicative and Kind.

And for whom do we mourn when they die? Do we take up our Lamentation for them who had much, either Wealth, or Learning, or Intereſt, but uſed it not? No, 'tis for them only who did good and communicated. Theſe are they whoſe loſs we feel. When they are gone, we miſs them, and find our ſelves and
others

others the worse, because they are taken from us.

For the others, we say of them, as hath been said of some other Animals, they never did good till they Died, and so rather rejoice than mourn that they are Dead. Not all their Wealth and Greatness, if not in conjunction with Charity and a well govern'd Mind, can purchase them the Praise of a Funeral Elegy, except from some Mercenary Orator, that sells his Breath; Whereas the Poor, the Unlearned Good Man, though he left nothing to buy an Elegy, though his Executors could not go to the Charge of Mourners, yet his good Deeds have extorted Praise from Men, and they Mourn in secret for him, whose little Estate could not put them in Black.

And how long doth his Memory last and live, who did good in his Life? When the Covetous Churl, or the Ambitious Aspirer, or the Intemperate Sensualist, or the Proud and Useless Scholar, or the Cunning Designer, their Name rots, and the remembrance of them is lost.

And thus much for the fourth particular; the last of these, wherein I have shewn these two excellent Vertues to be good to Man singly consider'd, and in reference to this Life only. I proceed to shew that they are good to Societies. For,

5. They are the Foundation of all the Vertues of Society and Conversation; that is, of Justice and Faithfulness, of due observation of Superiours, of a fitting respect to Equals, and regard to Inferiours, of Veracity and Candour,
of

of Comity and Urbanity, to name no more.
Briefly ;

1. Who is it, that withholds nothing from them to whom it is due, that gives every Man his own, but he whose affections are govern'd by Reason? who hath a just, and not too great a value for any of the things of this World? Whereas the Man whose desires are boundless and extravagant, whose affections and appetites are not controll'd and regulated by his Understanding, 'tis he that invades other Men's Rights, that transgresses all the bounds of Law and Justice.

'Tis the Covetous that defrauds or oppresses his Brother, the Ambitious that scorns and tramples on him, the brutish Sensualist that makes Rapes upon Chastity, and causes the Wife to violate the Covenant of God.

Again, Who regards the Concerns and Interests of other Men, but he that's kind and charitable? Who is tender of the Lives and Fortunes, and Name of other Men, but he that is by a loving temper disposed to do good?

The Man that's Malicious and Spiteful, that's envious and full of Revenge, he calumniates and slanders, he robs or murders, he regards neither the Body nor Soul, but by an impetuous Passion is hurried on to endeavour the Ruine and undoing of Men. No natural, nor positive Laws, no Reason or Authority can set bounds to the madness of these exorbitant Passions : and where moderate Desires and Charity are not, there they dwell and rule, and break out into all Injustice.

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2. Though

2. Though a Man have pass'd his Word, and be engaged by his Promise; yet they break those Bonds also. He that's acted by inordinate Affection, will not stand to his Word, nor be engaged by what he hath said, but violates the Sacred Ties of all Promises, tho' confirmed by Oath.

Who are the unfaithful and breakers of Covenants, but the Covetous Worldling, the Proud Aspirer, the Sensual Brute, or the Malicious Devil? Whereas if he hath a kindness and concern for other Men, and a just esteem of the Riches, and Honours, and Pleasures of this World, he cannot then be tempted to go from his Word, or made not to make good his engagement.

The Charitable Man, and he whose Affections are govern'd by Reason, and proportion'd to their Objects, will be sure to perform his Trust, and discharge all the Obligations himself and others have laid on him. He will not prey upon the Estates of Orphans committed to his Care; nor make himself an Heir, where he was intended only an Executor.

3. Again, What is it that makes Men more observant of Superiours, and more willing to submit to their Orders, and pay the Taxes that are imposed on them, more willingly and without reluctance, than love to Men and Society, and a just value of all things?

They will not envy the Crowns and Thrones of Princes, if they understand the Cares, and Fears, and Dangers that attend them; and they do understand these things, who are able to estimate them aright; nor will they be
back-

backward and averse to pay Tributes, who have not an over-great value for Money; the Men that are Charitable, and duly affected to Riches and Honours, &c. are very well disposed to an observance of their Governours in all respects.

4. And they must necessarily be fair to their Equals. The Pure and Charitable Mind cannot have any Temptation to unhandson Carriage toward such; these Vertues will not suffer him to envy their Welfare, nor to seek their Ruin: 'Tis only the Proud Man who cannot bear an equal; or the Covetous, who grudgeth that himself is not possesst of the Wealth of the whole World, and is displeased that others have any thing to live on. And,

5. Are not these the Graces that make the World tolerable for inferiours? Find out a Man that's Worldly-minded and Uncharitable, if he hath power and skill to do it, he crushes his poor Neighbour.

And with how much scorn doth the Arrogant treat the Man who is inferiour to him in Rank or Estate? And he whose Intemperance hath unman'd him, what Drudges doth he make of his Inferiours, to satisfy his Brutish Appetite?

6. Again, Who is the Man that dares be true, and speak his Thoughts, but he that hath overcome all inordinate affection to this World? That is not afraid of Disgrace, where Praise is not due; that values Vertue more than Money; and doth not think it worth while to disguise his Thoughts, will not do a thing so unnatural, nor indeed take so much pains as to put a

false Vizard over his Conceptions, that he may increase his Estate, or enhance his Credit. He will not run the hazard of losing so great an opportunity of doing good, as Man hath by Discourse, as he must, if he be once detected to falsifie.

7. And who will be so ingenuous, as to put a fair construction on all Words and Actions that will bear it? Who is it that thinks no Evil, that believes all things; that hopes and endures all? Or, who is he that will lovingly reprove the mistakes or mistaynages he sees? That will neither flatter, nor yet be over-censorious? is it not the Man that's Charitable, and whose Affections are subdued, to Reason? Whereas the Proud Man is morose and fullen, he accuses every one, and blames every thing they do or say.

The fearful and selfish Man flatters and dissimulates. And where Uncharitableness and Ambition are together (as they are commonly,) nothing can be born; but all Words are misconstrued; and all Actions taken in the worst part.

8. And are not these the dispositions of the Men that are Affable and Courteous? Are not Charity, and moderate Love to this World, the great Principles and Ingredients, of Humanity? Whence is it that Men are hospitable and kind to Strangers, but from these?

And lastly, is it not Good-Will to Men that defends them from Scurrility? 'Tis this that restrains the exorbitant expressions of an unruly Wit. A Malicious Wit wounds and galls the reputation of another, but Wit under the

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Government of Charity, corrects only in order to amendment, and is but a corrolive that eats out the Dead Flesh, and so makes for the healing of the Wound, that would otherwise fester; or if the Wound be green, it is a gentle, soft Oil, that insinuates it self into every corner of the part affected.

I need not say, that immoderate affection to the things of this World is the great Enemy to all pure and innocent Wit; for no Man's Discourse is so inoffensively and harmlessly witty, as his who is indifferent and unconcern'd.

Thus I have resolved the Vertues that are so necessary to Society, Justice and Faithfulness, and also those that are so absolutely requisite to make Conversation pleasant or profitable, into Purity and Charity.

So that if we receive any benefit from Company, or any delight from Converse, we are beholden to these two excellent Qualities for it. To these we owe that Men are not mischievous or useless to each other. These are they that make Company better than Solitude, and a Town more desirable than a WilderNESS; that render Men better to each other than Brutes, and keep them from being as bad as Devils.

6. After this I need only to suggest, that Peace and Quietness flow from these Fountains. Those which are so Essential to Justice and Fidelity, &c. are also absolutely necessary to Peace, which cannot continue without them: *Whence come Wars and Fightings, saith St. James, but from your Lusts, &c.*

Is it not easy to resolve all the private and publick Contentions that ever were, into want of Love to Men, and excess of Love to this World? Recall the memory of our own Observations, or search the Records of Antiquity, and we shall find these to have been the causes of the far greatest part of, if not all the Disturbances and Commotions, the Wars and Quarrels that have been in the World.

Men would not contend about little things, if they were Charitable; nor would they be unjust, if their Affections were subdued: Now most of our Contentions are about small things, and all are unjust in some part.

7. Having shewed how beneficial Purity and Charity are to Men singly consider'd, and to Bodies of Men in this present Life: I proceed, lastly, to shew that they are, 1. Serviceable; and, 2. Necessary to our future Happiness.

1. They are serviceable, as they dispose and help us,

1. To understand and know it.
2. To believe and expect it.
3. To love and desire. And,
4. To receive and enjoy it.

1. One great Obstacle in the way to our Happiness, is, That we have either very little Knowledge of it, or a false Representation, or a Knowledge that's very confused and general.

When we mistake it, we pursue either our Misery, or ultimately design some lesser Good, and so fall short.

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When we have only an obscure and confused Knowledg of it, our Designs are less certain (as he that hath but a glimmering Sight of the Mark, cannot take a sure Aim) our Prosecutions not so vigorous and constant.

So that that which corrects our Mistake, and removes our Ignorance, must necessarily contribute to our Happiness: For when we know clearly what that is, we do in a good measure understand the way that leads to it.

Now Purity and Charity assist us in the Understanding what that is. For we all know in general, that it is the best State of Man: and our Sense and Experience assure us, that to live in the Exercise of Love and good Will, and to preserve our Minds from inordinate Affections, this is the best State we can be in.

Besides, no Man can so well and fully understand Happiness, as he that is Happy; *εὐχάρις τὸ καλὸν ἔχειν*, saith *Plotinus*. What a Man is in Disposition and Habit, that he knows; and not that which he reads in Books, but hath not prov'd in himself.

Thus we see how by these we are assisted in understanding our Happiness, and so secured from all the wild extravagant Conceits, and false Notions which Men have of it.

2. To believe and expect it. A clear Understanding of what Happiness is, to him that believes the Goodness of God, is a great Inducement to believe, that it not only may, but shall be. For we may observe, that those Men who do not believe or expect a future Happiness, their Unbelief is founded in a false

Conception of it, or in a Misperſwaſion concerning the Goodneſs of God.

Now he that feels ſo much of it, as is in Purity and Charity, he is eaſily induced to believe that poſſible, which he already feels in ſo many Degrees, is: and that God will bring about that, which he is ſo very ſenſible is ſo good, and to which he hath brought him in a good Meaſure already. He cannot but hope for the Continuance and Increate of what he hath already attained; and his Expectation is ſtronger, becauſe by the Senſe he hath of the Goodneſs of Love, he concludes, that God who is abſolutely and perfectly Good, muſt be Love it ſelf: and therefore he muſt be poſſeſt with very good Hopes that he ſhall be happy; becauſe if he will it, who can oppoſe it?

3. To love and deſire it. He muſt earneſtly long for that which he feels ſo good. The better we underſtand that which is greatly Good, and the more we believe it poſſible and probable, the greater will be our Love to it, and the more earneſt and conſtant will be our Deſires after it.

Befides, the Man who is purified from Inordinacy of Affection to this World, will ſet his Affections on the Things of another: for if we obſerve, 'tis he whoſe Mind is immoderately carried after preſent and ſenſible Things, and thoſe that refer to this bodily Life, that is regardless of the Happineſs and Miſeries of the future State.

Theſe are the Men whoſe Minds are ſo fill'd with the Thoughts of what is, that they have

no Leisure to consider what shall be. The Body doth so possess them, that there is no room for the Soul. Their Desires are so glutted and satiated with this Earth, that they have none for Heaven. Their Treasure is here, and their Heart is with it.

Only they who see the Insufficiency and Emptiness of all Things in this World, and are unsatisfied with all the Honours, and Riches, and corporeal Delights, and are convinced, that Happiness is not in them; they only seek after, and long for the Happiness of Heaven.

And is it not Love and Good-Will that makes Men long for that good Estate, whence all Malice and Envy are for ever banished? Observe it, and you shall never see malicious, envious Souls, to desire after that good State: nor can they, for it's opposite to that wherein now they are, and which they approve and allow. And this leads me to the Fourth.

4. Whatsoever constitutes our Happiness, we cannot enjoy it without these Dispositions. We all know that 'tis not Things without us that are sufficient to make us happy: No, they must be enjoyed by us. Where there is not Enjoyment, that is, a Sense and Perception of, a Love and Delight to them, there is no Happiness. Now we all know there are certain Dispositions requisite to our Enjoyment: if the Mind be indisposed by Ignorance, and Inadvertency, or by Dislike and Aversion, nothing, how conducive soever to our Happiness, can be enjoyed by us. Now there's nothing that so much indisposes us for Enjoyment, as ungovern'd Affections, and want of Love;

no-

nothing so much disposes us to them, as Purity and Charity. This leads me to the other part, *viz.*

2. That these are not only serviceable, but necessary to our future Happiness. They are so necessary, that if they be, that will follow; and where they are not, it cannot be. They are necessary both *necessitate Præcepti, & Medii*. They are necessary both as Means pre-requisite, and as constituting Parts of that Happiness. We neither do what we ought before, if we be not Pure and Charitable; and our Happiness is a maimed, imperfect Thing, where these are left out: it cannot be call'd Happiness whilst our Affections are unreasonable, and we are destitute of Love and good Will.

See what the Scripture saith, *S. Matth. Ch. 5. v. 7, 8. and Chap. 6. v. 14, 15. 1 Cor. Ch. 13. v. 2, 3. Heb. Ch. 12. v. 14.* No beatifick Vision without these. And our own Reason, back'd by Experience, saith the same; for that assures us, That Man is not made Happy on a sudden, but by degrees; and that he doth not immediately leap out of one opposite State, into another; but is led into the intermediate Ways, and is made meet, by certain Preparatives and Dispositions, *to partake of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.*

Both Scripture and Reason agree in this, That Men shall have themselves, as they use themselves; that they shall be hereafter, as they have been here.

For the further Conviction of this, please to consider more distinctly,

I. That

I. That Heaven is not so much a Place as a State ; much more within us than without : so that he who is endued with clear Knowledge and excellent Wisdom, to whom virtuous Practice is natural, whose Faculties are exercised about the best Objects, and his Body is so healthy and well-temper'd, as not to molest, but be serviceable ; this Man, though he be on this Earth, is in many Degrees happy ; and Heaven signifies no more, but an Addition to this ; and to be in such Circumstances, as will best conduce to it

The Scripture speaks consonantly to this, 1 *Joh.* 3. 14, 15. and 5. 12, 13. And,

II. It is a State that consists principally of these two Things. Look into the Descriptions of that Blessedness which we find in Scripture, or in the Discourses of them who have best consider'd, and we shall find these two to be the principal Ingredients.

Take a Man whose Desires to this World are bounded by Nature, and his Affections govern'd by Reason, who hath quit himself of all unreasonable Appetites, of all inordinate, irregular Inclinations ; and who hath an Universal good Will, delights in all Good, and is bent on the promoting it ; this Man hath much of Eternal Life. He is very like the Souls of good Men in the other State ; he is already in good Measure as the Angels of God.

If we can conclude what Heaven is, by what God and his Angels are, then this that I have said is very apparent.

III. And

III. And if these two do principally constitute the Happiness of Heaven; if they be much of that State, then also by the Practice and Habits of these, we begin that Happiness, which is little more than a Confirmation, than a perfect Consummation of these excellent Qualities, Purity and Charity. When we practise these out of Principle and Nature, we have Eternal Life.

It's God's Method in other Cases to bring us to any State by the Actions, and Practices, and Dispositions, that are Degrees of it; these grow up into Habits, these are so strong, that they are our very Nature; and when they are so, we act with Pleasure and Constancy. These Actions will preserve and increase their Principles, and that will again dispose to Action; and when it is so, we are in such a State.

This is God's usual Method in all other Cases, by degrees, and little Beginnings, to bring Men to Perfection; and how can we think that he will depart from his Establishment in this particular? We cannot think it. And then it follows, that he who is Pure and Charitable here, will be happy hereafter: And he whose Soul is defiled with Covetousness and Pride, and Sensuality whilst he lives; and was full of Revenge and Malice, Uncharitable to his last Breath, shall not upon his Dissolution be in a quite opposite state to these, but will continue in the state to which he hath brought himself, that is, inordinacy of Affection, and Malice.

Besides all that I have said, I appeal to Experience, whether ever we feel our selves more
happy

happy, than when we have our Desires and Apperites regulated by Reason, and under the Government of our Understanding, and are in the freest Exercise of the most fervent and Universal Love and Charity; or more miserable, than when our Apperites are unreasonable, our Desires boundless, and we acted by Malice and Revenge.

If these were consistent with Happiness, what hinders the Devil from being Happy?

8. These are final and ultimate in Religion, therefore principal. The End is alway superior to the Means. 1 Tim. 1. 5. 1 Pet. 1. 22. Acts 15. 9.

Consider the Tendency of all the Articles of our Faith, of all the Precepts of our Religion, all religious Exercises and Performances, Hearing, Praying, Reading, they all tend to these; and if these be not, they are all vain Things, and as usefess as Means are, when the End proves abortive.

The want of this Consideration hath been of very ill Consequence amongst the Professors of Religion; it was the great Fault of the *Jews* of old, of the *Pharisees* in our Saviour's Time, and of Thousands of Formal Devotionists since, that they have staid in the Means, and never consider'd what was ultimate, and to what they refer'd.

~~They have been content to pray for that~~ Grace which they never use; and to hear those Directions which they never intend to follow; and to be perswaded by the Preacher to be willing to do that, which they never design to do.

And

And now after all that I have said, I will presume, that we are all sufficiently engaged to practise Purity and Charity, if we either consider God, or our Selves, or other Men. If we will either do that which is honourable and acceptable to him, which is pleasant and profitable to our selves ; which is Beneficial and necessary to Society, and Order, and Conversation, we must practise these. In short, if we either desire to be happy here, or hereafter.

A

A
DISCOURSE
OF
Repentance.

By HEZEKIAH BURTON, D.D.



L O N D O N ,

Printed for *Richard Chiswell*, at the *Rose* and
Crown, in *St. Paul's Church-yard*. 1684.

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By HENRIKIAH BURTON, D.D.



LONDON,

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A
DISCOURSE
OF
REPENTANCE.

S. Matth. 4. 17. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

THAT Repentance is absolutely necessary to secure every Man's Future Happiness, will be denied by no sober Christian. And that it is the best way to remove or prevent present and publick Calamities, is also believed by as many as give credit to the Sacred Oracles : For there Sinners are excited to Repentance, that so they might escape Divine Vengeance : And there also

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so are Records of both Princes and People, who by this have diverted God's Judgments from them, and been saved from utter Desolation.

On both these accounts, I think fit at this time to put you in remembrance of a thing so good and so necessary. In which, if by plain Discourse I can assist you, I shall think I have helped forward the Work of your Salvation, and also contributed to the Peace and Welfare of our Native Country; which ought to be every ones Care and Concern in his Place and State at all times, especially such as this.

My Discourse shall proceed in this method.

I. I will give some account of the Expressions that are in the Text.

II. Propound the notion of Repentance, and shew what that is to which our Saviour here exhorts; and shew some of those Mistakes in which Men are about it.

III. I will lay before you the Reasons and Grounds of it in general, and particularly such as are couched in these words, *For the Kingdom of Heaven, &c.*

IV. We will more particularly consider who are the Persons that ought to Repent, and of what, and when, and how long, and what Encouragements and Motives, what Helps they have so to do.

Of all which I shall make a particular Application to our selves of this Church and Kingdom.

I. I

1. I begin with the first, μετανοῆτε : This Word, if we consider it in its Original, signifies an after-mind, or second Thoughts; which because they commonly differ from, and are wiser and better than the first; therefore the Word is used to signify the being of another and a better mind than we were before.

First Ex-
plication
of the
Text.

And because the most signal Instance of our Wisdom or Folly is in our obeying or transgressing the Law of God; therefore is this Word almost appropriated to this Thing. And we are then said to repent, when we return to such a Mind, and recover such Thoughts of our Actions, as to judge that we did amiss, and otherwise than we ought, when we did that which was Evil, or omitted that which was Good; *i. e.* when we violated the Law of God, who alway requires us to do Good, and to abstain from Evil.

This must also be considered, that these Thoughts being about Good or Evil, must be accompanied with Affections, and our Will be moved by an Understanding of such Matters. Hence it is, that by this Word is denoted a Change in the Will and Affections, as well as in the Understanding and Thoughts: And not only this, but also the Actions that flow from the Will thus determin'd, are understood to be changed by Repentance, at least in the Scripture-use of that Word.

For in the Scripture (there being a great scarcity of Words among the *Jews*) one Word has many Significations, and in that more than in other Languages. Words are very complex and comprehensive, taking in both the Cause,

and the Effect : as in this Instance before us, *Repent* : which Word signifies not only the Change of the Mind, and of the Will, and Affections, but also of the Practice and Actions for the better. Our English Word, which we derive from the *French*, in its Origination denotes the same with the Greek, and is of the same Import in its Use. For Repenting is to think again, or a second time to consider. And as *re* sometimes signifies in our Language, it may denote to Unthink.

Thus much for the Word *Repent*. The Phrase that follows is more Jewish — *the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*; or has approached, or drawn near.

By the Kingdom of Heaven is generally and truly understood the Dispensation of the Messiah; or the Administration of Things under, and by the Son of God. This Phrase is supposed to be taken out of *Dan. 2. 44. In those Days shall the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed*, Chap. 7. v. 14, &c.

This is promiscuously called the Kingdom of God and of Heaven. Which may very well be, because Heaven is one of the Names by which the Jews call God : *Dan. 4. 26. that the Heavens do rule*; i. e. that he who rules in the Heavens, rules in the Earth also. Also because Gods Administration or Government by Christ, is such as he uses in Heaven, where his Kingdom is more conspicuous and visible than here it is. For on Earth his Officers and Deputies do too too often neglect their trust, and are guilty of Maledministration, nay, and become Rebels against their Supreme Lord, and joyn with his grand Enemy

Enemy, that Arch-Traitor and Rebel, the Devil, who is therefore call'd the God of this World, and the Prince of the Power of the Air. This obscures and opposes God's Government in Earth: But it is not so in Heaven, where his Laws are constantly obeyed, where there has been no Faction nor Rebellion since the first of ambitious and ill-busied Spirits, who kept not their own Station and proper Place.

This then I understand to be the Reason why the Gospel-dispensation, or the Administration of Things by the Messiah, is called the Kingdom of Heaven; because we who are Christians have the same Sovereign Lord, and the very same Laws, the same Protection and Aid, the same Rewards which they have there; and the same Punishments are inflicted on us when we transgress (for the Kind) which were on them. He who is Sovereign Lord over the Angels of Heaven, is our Supreme Lord here on Earth. And the Laws of Faith and Hope in God, of Love to him, and of Good-Will to our Fellow-Creatures, of Humility, and Modesty, and Purity in the Government of our selves, are the very same Laws which are given to the highest Angels of Glory. And inward Peace and Satisfaction, Joy, and Exultancy of Spirit, Advancement towards greater Perfection, are the Consequents and natural Rewards of their doing well, as they are of ours. They also live under the Influences, and receive the Assistances of the Holy Spirit, as we do.

It may well be call'd the Kingdom of Heaven, which is for substance the very same that is there. On this account St. Paul saith, *Phil.* 3. 20. *ἡμεῖς τὸ*

πολίτῳμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς, *i. e.* We are Citizens of of Heaven---belong to the Heavenly Polity— And may well esteem our selves Strangers and Foreigners on Earth, living by the Laws of another Country,--- and seeking for that other City, to which, by their Life and Being, they declare that they do belong.

Let me add only this to what I have said, That as the Dispensation under the Messias, is called the Kingdom of Heaven in general; so more particularly, when there was any clearer Manifestation made of the Divine Power and Wisdom, by which Things are governed in Heaven, this Expression was peculiarly appropriated to that; so *Matth. 26. 29. till I drink it new with you in the Kingdom of Heaven---* which learned Men do with great Probability refer to the time after the Resurrection; *i. e.* when the Divine Power and Justice shall manifest it self by the Resurrection of Christ, as it does in Heaven— And so this Phrase sometimes refers to the Destruction of Jerusalem, *Mat. 26. 28. There are some standing here, which shall not taste of Death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom;* *i. e.* till the Power and Justice of God, which are so conspicuous in Heaven, shall appear in throwing down the Enemies of God's Truth, and all that makes Opposition against the Designs of Divine Goodness and Wisdom, as the Jews did. And this may suffice for an account of that Phrase, *the Kingdom of Heaven.*

We may receive farther Light into this Exhortation of our Saviour, by considering the particular Occasion of his using it. Now

it

it is to be observed, that all his Discourses and Sayings had peculiar Reference to some Doctrines of the *Jews*; which were either the very same which he taught; and so he took that Advantage to perswade them of the Truth of what he said; or else they were directly contrary——so, *Blessed are the Poor*——*they that mourn*, &c. By these and such like Paradoxes he endeavoured to excite their Attention, and confute their Mistakes, and remove those Prejudices they were under; or else his Doctrine referred to their Practices.

The Doctrine of Repentance was on all these Accounts preached by our Saviour unto the *Jews*. For, first, It was an Opinion amongst them, that Repentance must usher in the Messiah. Secondly, yet the *Pharisees* seemed to think, that they needed no Repentance, they were Righteous; such as our Saviour saith needed not; *i. e.* thought they needed no Repentance; they were not Sinners as other Men.

Now to remove this false Prejudice, and to engage them to a Practice, which they dangerously neglected, He preaches to them this Doctrine of Repentance. Of this I now proceed to give an Account what it is, which was the second thing I propounded to do.

The Account I intend, shall be of that Repentance, which the Scripture calls *Repentance unto Life*; Acts 11. 18. *and to Salvation*, 2 Cor. 7. 10. such Repentance as whosoever has, shall be pardoned; and he with whom it is not found, shall not receive the Remission of his Sins.

2.
The true
Nature of
Repin-
tance ex-
plained.

*Descri-
ption of it
in general.*

Of this Repentance, I give this Description. It is such an Hatred of that Sin which I formerly loved, and lived in, and of all known Sins whatsoever ; as arising from the Conviction of the Evil, takes me off from the Practice of it for ever. Again ; It is such a Love of that Vertue to which before I had a Dislike, and of all known Vertues whatsoever, as proceeding from an Understanding of its Goodness, engages me in the Course, and to the End of my Life, to the performance of it.

This I take to be that Repentance to which the Gospel promises pardon of Sins, and eternal Life ; which whosoever has, shall be saved.

For a more full and clear Understanding of this, we may take notice of the following Particulars, which I therefore mention, because it is of great Moment for every one to have a very distinct Knowledg of so great and necessary a Duty as Repentance is.

*It's Parts,
Negative
and Positive.*

1. It consists of two Parts, Negative and Positive. The Scripture enjoyns both, *ceasing to do evil*, and *learning to do well*, as necessary in order to our Acceptance with God.

And assuredly, though a Man should abstain from all Evil, yet if he do no Good, he shall fall short of Happiness : however, he may escape some of the Torments of Hell, yet he will not all. He must undergo the *Pœna damni*, though he may be freed from the *Pœna sensus* ; though he may in some sort be delivered from Hell, yet he shall not be exalted to Heaven, unless he do the good he formerly neglected, as well as eschew the evil he before lived in.

2. Re-

2. Repentance denotes an Hatred of Sin--- *It's chief*
 and a Love of Goodness: These are the most *Ingred-*
 essential, and as I may say, formal and consti- *ents Ha-*
 tutive Parts of it; the very Nature and Perfe- *ired of*
 ction of it. All that is short of these, is short of *Sin, Love*
 Repentance unto Salvation. And where ever *of Good-*
 these are, all that the Scripture calls Repentance, *ness.*
 is implied in them, will certainly follow
 them.

All Knowledge, and Conviction, Sorrow
 and Shame, Fear and Dread, all Remorse and
 Anguish, which Men may have for Sin, if Hatred
 of that Sin do not accompany, if there be a se-
 cret Love and Liking of it, all this does not
 amount to Repentance. Nay, though we should
 part from it, yet if we inwardly approve and
 wish that we might do it, we cannot be said to
 repent of it: Therefore *David* every where
 speaks of his Hatred, and Abhorrence of
 evil Ways. And those that loved God, are
 called upon to hate Evil. 'Tis not sufficient that
 we abstain from it, but we must also hate
 it.

Again; 'tis not sufficient that we know, and
 do that which is good, but it is necessary that
 we love it also; that we do it willingly, and
 out of Choice, with Consent, and out of Liking.
 For nothing short of, nothing without this,
 ought to be looked on, as that Change of Mind
 to which God has promised Remission of Sins,
 and Eternal Life.

And where ever this Hatred of Sin, and Love
 of Vertue is, it will produce all those Effects;
 and does suppose or cause all those things in us,
 which the Scriptures attribute to Repentance.

If

If we truly hate Sin, we shall be sorry for what we our selves, or others have done, and be ashamed of it : we shall confess our Sins, accuse, and take Vengeance of our selves, deprecate God's Judgments, and sue for his Pardon for what is past. We shall break off the Course of sinning for the present, abstain from all Appearances of it, do the contrary : and for the Future we shall take up full and firm Resolutions to avoid it.

Where there is a true and hearty Hatred and Abhorrence of Sin, these Things which are Parts or Effects of Repentance will follow ; they cannot be separated.

The same may be said of the Love of Goodness. It's needless to be particular ; I will only observe, that *David* does not only speak of his keeping the Commandments, but of his loving them ; *Psal. 119. v. 97. O how love I thy Law ! v. 165. great Peace have they that love thy Law.* If they did it, and did not love it withal, they could not have great Peace. Both the Prophets and the Apostles call for this, *Amos 5. 15. Hate the Evil, and love the Good. Rom. 12. 9. Abhor that which is Evil, cleave to that which is Good.*

The Sum of what I have said, or would farther say in this Matter, is, That the other Things which integrate or make up Repentance, will not be where this Hatred of Sin, and Love of Vertue are not ; or if they should be, yet they would be of no Avail nor Account without them : No Opinion or Judgment, no Sorrow, or any other Passion ; no Performance or Practice separate from this, would find Acceptance with God

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The reason of all this is, that the Soul is indeed never changed, till its Love and Hatred be changed: A Man's mind is not thoroughly brought off from any thing or way, till he hate it; nor is he fully brought to any, till he love it; These are rightly by the Moralists, said to be the prime and leading Passions of the Soul; as they are, so is the Man, and so is his Way. Love and Hatred rule and govern, sway and incline all our Faculties; our whole Man is under their command; all our actions are determin'd by them.

Thus we have the account of that which is the first, and indeed the main Ingredient, the chief constituent of Repentance, *viz.* hatred of Sin, and love of Vertue.

3. I proceed to a more special designation of the Objects of this Love and Hatred, with the other causes, the effects, and the duration of it; by which will be manifest not only the Sincerity and Truth; but also the perfection and goodness of that hatred of Sin, and love of Vertue, wherein Repentance does chiefly consist.

*Its Objects
and Causes
are Sin
and Vertue.*

The Objects and Causes of the Repenters Love and Hatred are, in general, Sin and Vertue; *i. e.* the actions or the practice, which is the subject of these. And those actions which are good, *i. e.* becoming and beneficial (these are but different notions of the same thing,) or according to the Will and Law of God, (which is also the same, for God wills and commands all that is good,) these actions are the objects of the Penitents new Love. On the other side, those which are unbecoming, hurtful,

ful, and so violations of God's Law, and contrary to his Will ; these are the Objects of his Hatred.

In particular ; This Hatred is of that Sin, which before was loved and lived in : And this new Love, which is in Repentance, is of that Vertue which was formerly disliked and neglected. This is the immediate and primary object of the Repenting Sinner's Love and Hatred ; that Sin to which he formerly had a liking, in which he much delighted, he now loaths and abhors. And as it is said of *Amnon*, concerning *Tamar*, 2 *Sam.* 13. 15. the Hatred wherewith he now hates it, is greater than the Love wherewith he once loved it.

There are some Sins which may well be called a Man's own, (the expression is borrowed *Psal.* 18. 23.) to which his Nature, Education, Interest, Company, Humour, sways and enclines him. And the true Penitent, however he might be by his Temper inclined, by his Interest engaged ; however the Examples and Perswasions of others might affect him towards his Sin, however customary practice might bewitch him, and make it seem pleasing to him : Whatsoever it was that made him love and like it, whether the Profit that it brought him, or that he received Honour or any Gratification by it ; It has now no longer any such effect upon him ; but his love is turned into hatred, and his delight into loathing : The Drunkard and Glutton hate that Excess and Riot with which they formerly were so pleas'd : And he that gave up himself to Wantonness and Dalliance, and looked on this as his highest satisfaction, now ab-

abhors the thoughts of such wicked Follies ; opposes every inclination, and checks the very first motions towards them. He that before took Pleasure in laying heavy Burdens on other Men, in Injury and Oppression, now loves Mercy, and is pleas'd in doing acts of Kindness and Goodness to them. He who ere-while was not only a prophane neglecter of the Worship of God, and a scoffer of those that did frequent it, is now become their Companion, and glad when the time comes that they go to the House of God. He that afore glory'd in that shameful, senseless practice of trivial Swearing, now fears an Oath. In short, whatever Sin it was, against God or Men, himself or others, that he did before most like, and was most addicted to, he is now as averse from it.

To prevent mistake, I here interpose two *Caution* things.

I. That when I say the true Penitent loves that Vertue in particular, which he formerly hated, and hates that Sin which he formerly loved : I do not mean that this is done immediately, or that it is presently perfect ; for tho Repentance does often begin with displeasure against the Sin which a Man formerly took most pleasure in ; and tho' it end there too ; tho this be both the first and last, the beginning and consummation of Repentance, the first that's begun, and the last that's finished and perfected ; so that when a Man's hatred against his own beloved Sin, and his love of that Vertue to which he was most averse, is risen to its greatest

est height, then is his Repentance perfect: Yet thus we must understand it to be made in time, and by degrees. As a Man will probably take first notice of that Sin which he had most lived in; so it is not likely that all the affection he had for it will be altered in a moment, but by degrees, as he revolves in his Thoughts the mischiefs that have been done by it; and after that he is fully convinced of its evil nature, that it is opposite and irreconcilable to all Goodness; which is not done ordinarily without time.

Now before our Love be turned into such perfect Hatred, before Repentance has arrived at such Perfection, it may be sincere. If the hatred of my Sin be greater, and prevail against the love to it, tho it has not yet quite expell'd all manner, all degrees of love to, or liking of it, yet it will, I doubt not, be judged sincere, and find acceptance with God.

In short; We must not imaginethat this great Change is perfected suddenly, and at once, but gradually, and in time: And before it arrive at its utmost height and perfection, we may look on it as sincere and accepted; even then when the hatred a Man has to his Sin, is greater than his love of it.

2. I here speak of the Sin, not of that action which may, by being divested of some circumstances, become Sinless. For it is not the matter of any action, but those which the *Schools* call the circumstances of it, from whence it is named Good or Evil; all action in its general nature is indifferent, and may be either: Thus
to

to take away Life from another Man, if he be innocent, if it be done without just cause, without Warrant from lawful Authority, it is Murder, an high offence ; but if the Man be Guilty of Death, if this be after a Righteous Sentence is past, if in a just and good Cause, if with, and according to a lawful Commission, it is no fault at all.

This instance may shew, that the most flagitious action, if it be devided of some circumstances, and accompanied with others, may not only cease to be faulty, but become good and necessary. — I will give another, whereby we may discern the reason of this caution : It is this, Suppose a Man addicted to Wit and Rallery, and that he is extreamly delighted to use all such Discourses as are diverting to his Company, tho' he transgresses the bounds of Religion and Justice, of Charity and Modesty : Afterwards he considers well of this, and sees the folly and madness of such converse ; that it is unreasonable and unnatural to open his Mouth against Heaven, or to vilify a Man that is perhaps better than himself ; that it is inhumanity to expose him to Laughter and Scorn, who may more justly deserve to be the object of his Esteem, at least of his Pity : This, it may be, has been the Sin, to which by his Temper and Genius he has been addicted ; and by which he has done more mischief, and more frequently offended God than any other : he repenting of this, abhors the Prophaneness, the Obscenity, the Calumny, the Scurrility.--- He loaths these, but yet retains still an inclination to the Wit and pleasantness of Conversation ;

tion; that is innocent, acceptable, and without offence; no intrenchment on Piety towards God, or on good Nature to Men; nor does it take him off from an humble Deportment of himself. Thus he retains an inclination to a good liking of all that was natural, all that was reasonable and good in that Converse; and still has a disposition to the substance of the action, tho he hates all the Immorality, the Viciousness with which it was attended.

Take another instance. Suppose a Man to have conceived a hatred against Religious and Devout Performances, either because of the unreasonable length, or of the importune unseasonableness of them; or that he had observed them to be accompanied with Folly, and neglect of Men's employments, with dullness and ill Passions, especially with Inhumanity and Injustice, or any kind of Immorality. He apprehending Piety to be the cause, or the effect of such evil things as these; at least observing it to keep such evil Company, censures, and in his own Thoughts discards it, hates it for it's Companion's sake: But afterwards it pleases God to give him Repentance unto Salvation, and then he discovers the necessity of Piety and Devotion towards God, and is perfectly reconciled to it; retains a sense of God upon his Mind, loves to draw near to him, to offer up his Devotions, to Pray to him, and to Praise him both Publickly and Privately; but still he keeps his averſation to the tedious and unnecessary length of such Performances, he continues an averſation to the importune taking a Man off from the necessary works of his
his

his lawful Employment, or from acts of Charity and Mercy ; And above all, and more than ever, he abhors that Inhumanity and Unrighteousness, that Immorality and Ill-naturedness should be found in the Devout Religious Man ; there being so manifest a contradiction between them : And thus he is reconciled to Piety and Devotion, though he keep still at enmity with all those Evils and Follies that had join'd themselves with, and sheltred themselves under these, or the Shew and Pretence of them in any Person.

I have insisted the longer on this, that I might prevent or remove some Scruples, which may arise in an honest Mind ; as if he did not Repent, because he retains his love to some Action to which he was naturally inclined, or an hatred to that which he naturally hated ; this may very well consist with true Repentance, so long as he retains the substance, that which was or might be good in the action ; not the vicious and immoral Circumstances with which it was cloath'd.

I have also the rather endeavour'd to clear this matter ; because some Penitents are apt to fall into this mistake, that whatever they formerly hated, they must now love ; that they must not only love the Prayers, to which they were averse, but also their length, their unseasonableness, or whatever else did formerly accompany them : And that they must at least put a good interpretation on all the Indecencies, nay, and Immoralities, which in any have attended Religious Performances. And on the contrary, that they must hate and abhor not

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only

only the Excesses that are in Drinking; and the vain and foolish expence of Time that is in Company, but also fly from Company it self; and not allow themselves to drink, unless a painful Thirst put them in mind of, and call for it: Nay, they must not endure that Mirth which some intend, but fall short of, by excessive Drinking; no, though it be destitute of all that's prophane and foolish; and they must endeavour to extirpate all love of Company, to which the sociable nature of Man disposes him. These are great mistakes, and of dangerous consequence, but I have, I think, said enough to prevent them.

This may serve to have been spoken on that part of my description of Repentance, that it is an hatred of that Sin which was formerly loved and lived in; and a love of that Vertue to which there was before an aversion. That a Man's Soul be divorced from its *Dalila*, its beloved Sin, that which might be call'd its own iniquity, — and be reconciled to that particular Vertue, that piece of Goodness, to which before it had greatest Enmity, whether it was Godliness or Sobriety, and the good government of his own natural Appetite and Passions; or Charity and good Carriage towards other Men.

I need not prove that this is a necessary part of Repentance. For 'tis clear at first sight, that whatever Repentance it is that falls short of the hatred of a Man's beloved Sin, and love of his hated Vertue; 'tis not a through change of his Mind, 'tis no Repentance to Life till it come to this, that a Man may be willing,

willing and resolv'd to pull out that Sin which is as his right Eye, &c. and till those good practices which were bitter and irksom, become pleasing.

But this is not all that we are to observe, concerning the objects of that Love and Hatred, wherein I have shew'd Repentance does chiefly consist: I add, That it is an hatred of all known Sin whatsoever, and a love of all known Vertue.

Indeed it may well be presumed, that if a Man once come to hate the Sin he formerly loved, that he will hate all Sin; and if he love the Good he formerly hated, that he will love all Good. — But because it is possible that one may better discern the evil of that Sin which he most lived in, than of others; and for some particular reasons may be brought to hate that; and that also for some by and singular respects, he may be reconciled to a practice which he formerly declined. And because I would be as plain and full in my description of Repentance as I could; that I might leave no room for mistakes (if possible, in this matter) they being so very pernicious, I have therefore added, *of all known Sin and Vertue whatsoever.*

This is, I think, agreed by all that discourse of this Argument, that Repentance is not true, nor thorough, unless it be of all Sin: And it is plain to any one that considers, that the Soul has not undergone the Salutory Change, whereby it is prepared for, and entitled to Pardon and Happiness, till it be taken off from all Sin, and reconciled to all Vertue whatsoever,

till it hate all Viciousness, and love all Goodness. For so long as the Soul continues to like any Sin whatsoever, any thing that appears such, so long it does not truly hate Sin; And till that be done, it is indisposed to, it is incapable of that Pardon, and those other Blessednesses, which the Gospel has promised. And so likewise, till a Man be made to love and like all that which he knows to be good and fit, he is neither entitled to, nor qualified for those benefits which the Covenant of Grace assures all true Penitents that they shall receive. If we could suppose God willing to give them to such (which we cannot, he having no where declared that he will) yet they are in no possibility to receive them, whilst their Souls are not out of Love with all Sin, and in love with all Vertue.

And if we go to the Scripture for a proof of this, that will I am sure confirm us in this persuasion; there we shall find *David* (who seems to have been as great an instance of Repentance, as any upon Record,) in many places expressing himself thus: *Psal. 119. 6. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy Commandments.* — If he had not had respect to them all, he could not have secured himself from shame. Therefore was it, that he desired, *Psal. 51. to be washed thoroughly from his Iniquity, and cleansed from his Sin.* He knew, that if he regarded Iniquity in his heart, God would not hear his Prayer, *Psal. 68. 18. He declares, That he esteemed all God's Precepts to be right concerning all things, and that he hated every false way, Psal. 119. 128. Every false,*

false, *i. e.* every evil way, every wicked vicious practice --- which are therefore called false ways, both because they deceive those that walk in them, and instead of leading them to Life, and to that Good which they expect, bring them to that Death and Wo which they hope to avoid. And also because they are founded on Falshood and Lies; as indeed the Principle of all Viciousness, and Sin, is false and foolish reasoning; and the foundation of all Wickedness whatsoever, is mistakes and ill Discourse.

I need not add any more to this, since it is so commonly said and acknowledged, that he who does not Repent of all Sin, does not truly Repent of any: And he that is not in his heart reconciled to every Duty, neither is he reconciled to any one as he ought to be. — The reason of which is, because (as has been already intimated,) if the change of the Soul be not thus through and universal, neither is it capable of that Good, without which it cannot be happy. So long as there is any remainder of enmity against the Law of God, and the least reluctance against our Duty, or but a secret approbation of any one vicious Practice, and the least inclination to it, we cannot be compleatly happy, we must so far fall short of consummate Happiness.

I will conclude this particular when I have removed two Doubts, which this Discourse may occasion in some Mens minds.

I. That no Man is so thoroughly changed, <sup>Objecti-
ons.</sup> that he has not some inclination, some love to one Sin or other.

N 3

II. Or

II. Or at least he may have this, tho he know it not; some Sin may be yet undiscovered to him, which he loves and lives in.

To this I reply, To the first.

Reply to
the first.

1. I do not suppose any here to have attain'd to that greatest Perfection, — and consequently that there is none who loves Goodness so much but he may love it more; nor is there any, I believe, that has an equal respect to all and every part of his Duty. But yet,

2. I do suppose that every one who truly repents, does hate every Sin with such a hatred as is superior to, and prevails against the love or inclination he has to it, which is enough to a denomination: — And tho the true Penitent, who has gone through such a Change, as brings him within the compass of God's promise of Pardon; and makes him a subject capable of some good degrees of happiness, may not yet be freed from all evil inclinations; and his love to some Vertues may be greatly allay'd with the mixture of contrary dispositions; yet those are predominant, as is evident by the effects.

Reply to
the second.

This may satisfy the first Doubt. As to the second, that there may be some Sin I know not, to which I may have a prevailing Love: I have in the description of Repentance prevented it, by mentioning all *known Sin*, and all *known Vertue*: For I do not in the least question, but that he that hates all the Sin, and loves all Vertue which he knows; and if this Love and Hatred proceed from a Conviction of the goodness of Vertue, and of the evil of Sin and Vice;

Vice ; that his Mind is in such a Temper, that it will loath all that he shall afterwards discover to be vicious, and cleave to all that at any time he shall understand to be good. And he that is thus affected, he has repented to Life, and is accepted of God.

Such an one from his Heart will say with *David*, *Search me, O God, and know my Heart : try me, and know my Thoughts, and see if there be any wicked Way in me, and lead me in the Way everlasting.* Psal. 139. v. 23, 24. He that prays thus with Resolution against, and Abhorrence of all Wickedness, and out of Love to all that is good and vertuous ; he cannot but be reckoned in the Number of those that truly repent.

VVherefore , though it may be reasonably presumed, that any one may be so far ignorant, as not to know all that to be Sin or Vertue , which is so indeed : Nay, though in some Cases he may be under such Mistakes as to call Good, Evil, and Evil, Good ; yet if he does at present truly hate all that which he knows to be sinful, and because it is sinful ; and sincerely loves all that he thinks good and holy, and for this very Cause : And if that be the Temper of his Soul, then he will, upon the Discovery of any Thing to be just and fit, or unbecoming and dishonest, love or hate it ; and consequently be owned by God, as one so changed, that he is qualified for Pardon, and is in the VVay to Perfection, and disposed to do the greatest Good to the VVorld, which is really all that is meant in Scripture by Repentance.]

This Love
and Ha-
tred arises
from Un-
derstand-
ing and
Knowledg.

Having given this Account of that Love and Hatred, wherein I place the Life and Soul of Gospel-repentance; I now proceed to that which is the Soul, is Antecedent to, and causal of these Affections. And that is a Conviction of the evil of Sin, and of the Goodness of Holiness and Vertue. It must arise from Knowledge, and must mend the Practice, and also must abide alway.

The Original or Cause of it must be Understanding or Knowledge, a well-grounded Perswasion of the Evil of Sin, and of the Goodness of Vertue; whether this arises from inward Sense, or from Consideration and rational Deductions and Discourses; or whether it be founded on some Testimony and credible Authority: on some one, or on all of these, it matters not, if the Mind be truly and reasonably perswaded, that Sin, consider'd in its own Nature, and the dire Effects of it, is the worst and greatest of all Evils; and that all Vertue is the most lovely, valuable, desirable Thing in the whole VVorld: that this, together vvith the Blessedness and glorious Rewards vvhich are naturally consequent to, and by the Divine Bounty appendant on, and annexed to such a Practice and Temper, is the whole Happiness of Man, and all that he aims at.

That my Discourse may be more distinct, I will a little enlarge on these two Particulars.

1. This Knowledge must be not only absolute, but comparative.

2. It

2. It is not material of what sort it be, so it be true and rational.

1. When I say the Soul should be perswaded of the Evil of Sin, I mean it comparatively, that Sin is a greater and worse Evil than any Thing else. No Poverty, no Disgrace, no Sickness, nothing that's partable from Sin, is so evil as it, together with its black Train of mischievous Effects, are.

Now the Reason why I require this Comparative Knowledge of the evil of Sin, &c. is, because no Man almost but does think Sin Evil, and Vertue Good in the general; Nay, and in divers, perhaps all Particulars; and therefore if there be no Temptation to the one, if there be no Competition with the other, he will scarce do the one, or forbear the other. For Instance:

No Man would be drunk, if he did not esteem the Pleasures of that Excess and Forgetfulness that follows it, and the Advantages he receives by the Company, which he cannot keep on other Terms than to be drunk with them, to be better and more valuable than Sobriety: and that these will make amends for all the Mischiefs of his Intemperance.

These are indeed false and foolish Thoughts, but they are the Thoughts of all such as allow themselves in this Practice: And if it were not for them, that secret sense which human Nature has of the Evil of this, as well as other notorious Sins, would keep them from falling into them.

On

On the other hand: We have either implanted in our Natures at first, or by the super-venient Assistance of God's Grace, or by both ways, wrought in us such a Sense of the Goodness of most, or of all Vertue, that we should certainly be engaged to the practise of it, if it did not stand in Competition with something which we esteem better.

Who would not continue in the innocent and quiet Pleasure of Chastity, if his Imagination of more and greater Pleasures in the Violation of it did not transport him to that Folly? Who would not always speak Truth, if he did not apprehend he should serve or secure a greater Interest by a Lye?

Wherefore since every Man, for all that appears, has some secret Apprehension of the Evil of all, or of most Sin, and of the Beauty and Goodness of Vertue: And yet most Men live in the Practice of Sin, and the neglect of Vertue: and this is, because, though they think Sin evil, yet they think somewhat else worse; as Poverty, or Persecution. And so, though they have a good liking of Holiness, yet they prefer Riches, or Honour, or sensual Gratifications before it. Hence appears how necessary the Knowledge of the Evil of Sin is, on which is founded that Hatred of it, which is part of true Repentance. And likewise how requisite it is, that this Knowledge of it be not only positive, but comparative and relative; *i. e.* that it is the worst Thing in the World. Because if I be not perswaded of this, I shall at one Time or other give my Consent to that Sin, whereby I shall hope to escape that which I account a
greater

greater Evil than the Sin is, or will cause; that is, I shall swear, or lye, or be drunk for Company; or commit Adultery, or Murder, if these at any time appear to be the Ways to escape Death, or Poverty, or Reproach, or whatever it is we esteem worse than those Sins, and their Consequents. — Or if we can by such Practices hope to procure to our selves far greater Advantages, than by keeping our Innocence we could expect—— Nay, though this should never happen, yet if we be not convinced, that Sin is the worst of all Evils, and that Vertue with its Appendants (for so I alway understand it) is not the greatest and best of all good Things--- there being a Failure, a Flaw at the Foundation, our Repentance will not be acceptable in the Sight of him, who judges truly and righteously; who sees our Thoughts long before, and knows what we would do in such and such Instances, if they should befall us. God sees not only what we do, but what we would do in all Varieties of Cases. He sees both our Works, and the Principles from whence they flow; and will recompence us according to both. For they that do the same good Actions, but not with equally good Minds, shall be unequally rewarded. And in like manner they who do ill, but yet in other Circumstances would do better, shall suffer less than they, who at all Times, and in all Cases would be bad. *It shall be more tollerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, saies our Saviour: for if they had seen the mighty Works which were done in Capernaum, they would have repented.*

To

To conclude this Particular; the Reason why I lay so much stress upon this comparative Knowledg of the Evil of Sin, and the Goodness of Vertue, is, because without this there cannot be such an Hatred of the one, and Love of the other, as is necessary to dispose the Soul for those Blessings which only can make it happy. For without such a Perswasion of these Things, the Soul cannot hate Sin, nor love Vertue thoroughly and universally, and without this it cannot be happy.

If two men build their Houses on the Sand; but one of them falls not, because the Stream does not bear against it---His Folly is as great, though his Fortune be better than the others. So in this Case--- they are equally guilty, who are equally foolish.

If we do not think Sin the worst, and Vertue the very best of all things, we do not think truly---- and to be mistaken or ignorant in such a matter, cannot consist with Happines.

2. It is not necessary to regard of what sort and kind of Knowledg this is, nor how it is begot in us, so long as it is true and reasonable, and that we be thoroughly perswaded; let it be by believing, by reasoning, by sense, 'tis all one to our purpose.

Suppose we, a Man only perswaded by his own inward Sense, or the immediate Perception he has of Sin and Vertue; and that this is the best, and that the worst Thing of all. And from this Sensation he draws this Conclusion, to which his Mind gives a firm Assent. This Knowledg, I doubt not, may be a sufficient Ground

Ground for that Hatred and Abhorrence of Sin, vvhich, I have shewed, is the main of Repentance. Much more sufficient vvill this Knowledg be, vvhen it is enlarged and confirmed by Discourse. When comparing such Actions vvith the Nature of Man, they appear monstrous and ugly, indecent and incongruous to such a Nature as ours : Nay, and in their natural and necessary Effects, first lessening and impairing, and at last destroying it. When they shall appear to the considering Mind pregnant vvith Mischief, not to him that does them only, but to others, to the rest of the World—— As the Soul discerns more Evil than it did before, only by sense, and has more distinct Thoughts of it; so is its Hatred proportionably encreas'd. And yet still more, vvhen those natural Reasonings are helped and seconded by farther Revelations--- When a Man shall consider and give full Credit to vvhat the sacred Scriptures say in this Matter, hovv Sin is there represented as the In-let and Original of all the Evils in the World; and that it vvill certainly bring those that live in it, into the most dreadful Woes that can be imagined after this Life. This vvill make the Foundation of our Repentance still more large and firm.

Thus then, if we have but any one of these severall Kinds of Knowledg, it will be sufficient, though it be that which is commonly reputed the lowest (though indeed it is not so) I mean inward Sense : yet even this will be sufficient to our Purpose, to cause us to hate Sin.

Or, suppose a Man's Perswasion of this rely only on the Testimony of another, yet this is
enough,

enough, supposing that true which he believes, and that his Belief is reasonable.

This indeed must be confessed, that the better and more perfect Knowledge any Man has of the Evil of Sin, &c. the more effectual it will be to the producing and increasing of that Hatred, in which Repentance does principally consist. But yet if there be but so much, as that that Hatred of Sin, and Love of Goodness (which naturally arises from, and bears Proportion with it) will have those Effects, and continue so long as I have mentioned, it is enough.

From what has been discoursed, you will infer; that the Knowledge, which is supposed in Repentance, is distinguished not only from Mistake, false Reasonings, and ungrounded Opinions, to which it is directly opposed; but also from meer Imagination, present and sudden Apprehension, Humour, Custom, animal Inclination, or whatever else (besides inward Sense, rational Discourse, and Faith) may be the Principle of a present Persuasion in the Mind of Man.

If any should not know how to distinguish true Knowledge from Imagination, &c. I give him these Marks, this Description: That it is a Persuasion that is clear and evident, calm and quiet, steady and even, constant and lasting; and is begun, continued, and increased by diligent Enquiry, by free Discourse, by frequent and impartial Consideration; and 'tis that of which the Soul has the greatest Assurance then when she is, and feels her self in her best Plight, and most perfect State.

Having •

Having made this Corollary, proceed we now to the Reasons, why such a Knowledg as has been described, is absolutely necessary to that Love and Hatred which are the chief Ingredients in and Constituents of Repentance. And they are these.

I. Because those Passions, without this Knowledg, would be of no account or value in Morality; nay, they would have no place at all amongst human things, if they did not proceed from this Cause.

II. This Knowledg is also necessary to their good direction and conduct. And,

III. Unless they flow from, and be fed by this Spring, they cannot be supposed to continue very long.

1. This may be confirm'd from the unanimous consent of the Moralists, who all make Knowledg and Understanding essential to Virtue. Nay, if any Action be done but inadvertently, the Man not thinking what he does, they will not call it an human Action.

We may also appeal to the common sense of Mankind, for a confirmation of this. And we may observe that if one Man receive a benefit from another, who never intended it, but it was without consideration, without his knowledg; he does not think himself obliged to the other, nor does he repute him any more than an Instrument. For he says, he knew not, he understood not what he did.

Thus

Thus both the Learned and the Vulgar agree, that where Understanding is not the Principle, that is of no account in Morality ; wherefore Knowledg is in the Opinion of all so necessary, so essential to Vertue, that nothing is esteem'd morally good and laudable, which is not under its influence.

But though these be good and convincing Arguments, let us go to better, *i. e.* to Holy Scripture. As 2 Pet. 1. 5. *Add to your Faith Vertue, and to Vertue Knowledg.* It seems in the Apostle's account, an increase in Knowledg would be beneficial to them who had Faith and Vertue ; and it seems to imply, that neither would their Faith be so precious, nor their Vertue so commendable, if they were not in conjunction with, and under the conduct of Knowledg. --- Phil. 1. 9. *I pray that your Love may abound more and more in Knowledg, and in all Judgment.* From whence we plainly infer, that St. Paul thought that even Love it self is more considerable, by being joined with Knowledg and good Judgment. --- And the same St. Paul, Rom. 10. 2. disparages and vilifies one of the most illustrious things in Religion, because it was not with and under the direction of Knowledg. *They, says he, have a Zeal for God, but not according to Knowledg.* And if Zeal be not allowable, if it be culpable when it is not joined with Knowledg ; what is there that can be commended without it ? --- John 4. 22. Our Saviour finds fault with the Samaritans, because *they worshipped they knew not what* : And prefers the Jews before them, because they knew what they worshipped. If Ignorance were excusable

ble any where, it would surely be in the infinite Majesty whom we adore ; but yet our Saviour censures there, and condemns that Worship which was joyn'd with such Ignorance.

To mention no more Texts ; the Scripture every where calling Religion, Wisdom ; and Wickedness, Folly. And the Designs of the Gospel being to teach Men, our Saviour being *a Teacher sent from God* ; and the Holy Spirit coming to convince, &c. do all plainly shew, that Understanding is of great account in Religion.

If enough had not been said to shew of what moment Understanding is in all things of moral Consideration, I would add, that Knowledg is the principal Faculty of Man ; that which makes him, and distinguishes him from Beings of inferior Orders, that which renders him subject to Laws, and so puts him in a Capacity of Vertue and Vice.

Those Actions therefore, which are done by any one, but not in the Use of his Understanding, are not the Actions of that which is truly and properly the Man, but of something else which is short of Man : Nor can they any more be called vertuous, than the Actions of an Horse, or of a meer natural Agent.

Having sufficiently proved this in General, that nothing without Knowledg is to be reputed morally Good. Now as to the Matter before us, Hatred of Sin, and Love of Vertue, which are not derived from Knowledg, are short of that Love and Hatred which constitute Repentance ; because (as has been shew'd) they are of no account in Morality.

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Thus then, suppose a Man to have conceived a great Hatred against Sensuality, and Love to Temperance ; but both these arise from, and proceed on such Mistakes as these, that every one ought to repress, and subdue, and quite mortify and extirpate all Inclinations to bodily Gratifications, as much as is possible, and never give it over till he has perfectly vanquished, and beat them out of the Field, so that they shall never once appear, nor stir. And that this is the State of Perfection, at which he is to aim in this Life. Or else imagine, that his great Love to Temperance proceeds from the Decay which Age has made in his Body ; he has no Appetite left for such Gratifications, which, as long as he had, he was enslaved to it. Or, it may be the great Esteem which he has for Temperance, is, because he sees it the way to be rich, or to be thought a wise and virtuous Man.

Now whosoever on such accounts, and from such Principles as these, abstains from Excess, and falls in Love with Sobriety, cannot be esteemed virtuously temperate. Nor is his Hatred of Intemperance of any Value on a moral Account, either because it is founded on Mistakes and Falshoods, as when he thinks that to be Temperance which is not : Or he is moved with little and weak Reasons, such as growing Rich : Or it is meerly the Effect of a bodily Temper ; and so every Beast that does not gorge it self to Disease and Death, may as properly be called a virtuous Lover of Temperance, and a Hater of Sensuality, as such a man.

No,

No, 'tis he only that understands the Goodness of a sober use of himself, and keeping his Appetites in that Order, and within those Bounds which are set them by Nature, so as they shall not molest or hurt, but help and serve the higher Faculties. He that sees the fitness of this, and the innumerable most valuable Benefits which it brings along with it; that knows this to be the Will of him that made us; and that by thus doing, he preserves that Order, which the great Creator at first establish'd: He it is, that seeing so much Good in it, and on such accounts falls in love with this excellent Vertue, he is the true vertuous Lover of it.

2. Knowledg is necessary for the Conduct and Guidance of this Love and Hatred. Our Understanding is the Director of all our Actions, of our whole Course, of all our Inclinations and Appetites, and of all our Faculties.

Indeed this was manifestly designed by the wise Author of our Being, to direct and guide all our other Faculties. Therefore we always enquire for a Reason of such or such Actions: And if we find they are done without, or against Reason, we blame them, we look on them as unnatural, as monstrous. And whatever Faculty or Appetite is not under the Conduct of Understanding, we look on it as irregular and exorbitant: It is like an ignorant, nay, a blind Way-faring-man that has lost his Guide; What can be expected,

cted, but that he endlessly wander, or fall down some dangerous Precipices ?

To apply this to the Matter in hand : How often has it been thus with the Penitent, whose new Affections have not been directed by Knowledg ? How frequently has he hated that, which he should have loved ? Or, if his Affection has not been misplaced, yet how has it been disproportion'd to its Object, in no sort answering the good and evil of things, but either far exceeding, or falling short of them ?

Wherefore, how necessary is it, that he should be directed and govern'd in his Love and Hatred, and all his Passions, by Knowledg ? that his Understanding should go before him in all these more vehement Emotions of Soul ? There is no such sure and trusty Guide as this. There is none that can shew and correct their Exorbitances ; that can check, and controul, and direct their Irregularities.

We should be apt to be equally affected towards the least and the greatest Things, if Understanding and Observation did not shew the difference. If we were not informed which were the weightier, and which the lesser Matters of the Law, we should be as zealous in tithing Mint, &c. as in Righteousness and Truth, as in the Love of God and Men.

3. They will not continue, unless they arise from a Principle of Understanding. There is nothing in us, that is so constant
and

and stable as this ; Nay, nothing is fixed and permanent besides good Understanding, and what depends upon it. Fancy and Imagination, Mistakes and Ill-reasonings, bodily Temper, and animal Inclinations, are fickle and unconstant Things, of uncertain Abode, they stay for a Moment, and then vanish. But Understanding that is founded in Sense and Experience, that is enlarged and confirm'd by reasoning, that is natural and unquestioned, that is attested and ratified by good Authority, that is encreased and established by frequent impartial Consideration, and free Enquiries: This abides for ever, and will last as long as human Nature, as long as the Soul it self will be.

Now this being the only fixed and lasting Thing in us, it is necessary that it should be the Principle of that Hatred of Sin, and Love of Goodness, which must abide in us for ever. For these are not to be transient Passions, but constant and permanent; this is always to be the Temper of our Minds.

We must love the Divine Laws, the ways of Goodness at all Times, as *David* did; and hate Sin always—— which we cannot do, unless our Love and Hatred flow from, and be maintained by Knowledg and Truth. If they be the Effects of any other Cause, if they derive themselves from Imagination, or Temper, or any other Thing than this, they are Streams that flow from a Land-flood, a Torrent which will quickly dry up. But Truth and Knowledg are a never-fail-

ing Spring, from whence the Waters will flow constantly.

Having already considered, that hatred of Sin, and Love of Vertue, and that Knowledge of the Evil of the one, and Good of the other, whence these arise. I have consider'd all that is necessary of Repentance, so far as it is transacted in the Soul ; though I have scarce so much as named those purposes of breaking off a sinful Course, and living better ; and that great Sorrow which must always accompany such bitter Reflections, as the Penitent makes on his past Life : As also that secret Joy which will arise from a Sense which he has of his Recovery into a better State. And I think I need not insist on these, because they are implied and supposed by, and inseparable from that Knowledge and those Affections, of which I have treated.

Assuredly, whoever thinks Sin in it self, and Effects, to be the worst thing in the World, and Virtue the best : And whose Love and Hatred are directed by, and proportioned according to this Knowledge ; he must, and will be heartily sorry, that he has spent so much of his Time in the commission of the one, and neglect of the other ; and he will be angry at, and consequently take Vengeance on himself for such stupid, and amazing Folly. He also will undoubtedly resolve for the Future on another Course, and take up firm Purposes of Amendment.— All which, and whatever of Repentance is transacted in the Soul, I forbear

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bear to enlarge on, because I have, and shall discourse of them in their necessary Causes, and their certain Effects,---for so I take understanding of the Evil of Sin, and Good of Holiness, and the hatred of that, and love of this, which are the two leading and governing Affections of the Soul, to be their necessary causes: And the change of our Actions and Practices to be the certain Effects, and inseparable Attendants of such Passions and Resolves. I content myself with those Generals of Repentance, which are principal in it, and infer the rest.

I now proceed to the Effects of those Causes which have been discoursed, and which are as necessary to true Repentance, as any Thing is---. What I intend on this Argument, shall be under these three Particulars.

1. I will consider what Change of our Actions, what Amendment of Practice will follow upon our Knowledge and Hatred of Sin, and our Understanding Love of Vertue. Where I shall observe somewhat, both of the Actions that are chang'd, and how far they are chang'd.

Effects of the
fore-going
Causes of Re-
pentance.

2. I will shew how, in what manner, and by what Means this Effect is wrought by the fore-named Knowledge and Affections. And then,

3. I will endeavour to evince, that such a Change in our Manners is necessary and essential to Repentance; and that it is defective and maimed, without such a Reformation.

1. To the first, I answer generally, speaking, That it is an Amendment of all those Actions that were amiss; a ceasing from the Evil which we formerly committed; and a Performance of all those good Actions, which before we left undone. 'Tis a forsaking every evil Way, and a walking in all good Paths.

More particularly, the Thoughts and Imaginations are brought under some Subjection; they are at least check'd and call'd to account at present, and in Time, and by Degrees grow better. The Reasonings and Discourses of our Minds are directed to other Objects and Matters, than formerly they were engaged about. Our Desires and Appetites, our Fears and Hopes are let out principally upon, and carried after other, and sometimes contrary Things to those, on which they were set before.

We shall no longer covet Wealth, or aspire after Honour and high Places, or thirst after sensible Pleasures above all Things: But we shall in the first place *seek the Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness thereof*; we shall seek after Vertue and Holiness principally, and all our other Studies and Endeavours

deavours will be brought into subordination to this; and if they be inconsistent with, and opposite to it, we shall lay them aside.

Our Words and Speeches, if they were formerly wicked or vain, are become good and profitable. If we opened our mouths against Heaven, and bid Desiance to God himself, by Atheistic, by Prophane, and Irreligious talk, we now express a sense of Piety and Devotion in our Communications. Or, if we have injured our Neighbours, by Lying, by false Accusations, by Slander and Detraction, we now curb our Tongues, and either speak that Good which we know, or reasonably and charitably hope is in another; or are silent, unless Charity make it necessary to declare some Evil, which we cannot in faithfulness to the interests of Vertue and Friendship, conceal. Or if our Tongues have been the Servants of idle and foolish Thoughts, and Instruments to convey vain Speculations, or ill sense to the minds of the Hearers, or to make only an unprofitable and ungrateful noise in their Ears, they shall now be taught to utter words that will minister Grace, that will be useful and acceptable to them that hear us.

Lastly; Those which we commonly call our works, *i.e.* our other external Actions, which we distinguish from Words; if they were formerly evil in their matters, such as excessive gorging our selves with Meat and Drink, Adultery, Oppression, Extortion, Bar-

Barbarous usage of those under our Power, Theft, Murder, or the like, they shall now be changed ; We shall be sober and temperate ; and our behaviour to others will be civil and just, chaste and humane. Or, if we lived not in such gross Enormities aforenamed, but did those Actions that were indifferent in their own nature only, with a bad Mind, from wrong Principles, and for ill Ends ; acted either from ignorance or mistake, or pravity and ill disposition, from inordinate affection, and evil desires : Now after this great and good Change, Truth and Knowledge, good Understanding, and Vertuous Affections, Love to God, and good Will to Men, are become the Principles and Sources of our Actions.

Here it may be demanded, Whether all this will be done presently, together with, or immediately after that Change which is made in the Soul ? or whether some longer time be allotted for it ?

Again, it may be ask'd, If this change at any time be compleat and perfect whilst we are here ? and if not, as indeed it is not, then what degree is necessary ? and how much must our Lives be mended ? when will they be so good as may be sufficient to bring us within the number of those that Repent to Salvation ?

To the first Query I reply :

Some of our Actions will be made better according, and as soon as our Minds are better inform'd and disposed, but there is
not

not the same necessity of them to be so all: Longer time may be required for the alteration of some practices, even after the Soul knows and loves the good of Virtue, and hates the evil of Vice and Sin.

The reason of which difference is this; there are some actions that do more directly and immediately fall under this power and command of the Will, and do more necessarily depend upon it than others, which are subject to its Empire only indirectly and remotely, but do immediately depend on other Causes, over which the Soul has no such Command.

Of the latter sort I count the first Motions, Thoughts and Imaginations that rise in the Soul, and also those Appetites which it necessarily has from conjunction with the Body, such as Hunger, Thirst, &c. Likewise the Motions of the parts of an unhealthy Body. [The former sort are the Affections of the Soul it self, those I mean that are unmixed, and have not their Original from its conjunction with the Body; such are Desires of Truth and Goodness, and endeavours after these.]

Now this sort of Actions must necessarily follow the changes of the Soul; and according as the Light of the Understanding varies, these affections must vary with it; and as soon as the Will determines what shall be, the Members of the Body move or rest; move thus or thus: And as our Love or Hatred is, all those other Affections, which are nothing but these diversified by
Time

Time, or some such Accidents, must be too.— And as soon as they are, must begin. So where I love any thing, which I see may probably be obtain'd, I shall certainly hope for it. And where I hate any Evil, which I see may likely come to pass, I must fear it; I cannot be otherwise affected to the Evil I hate, and apprehend will come upon me.

What I now say seems very plain, *viz.* Such as our Knowledg, and the Love and Hatred that arise from it are, such must be those Actions that arise from, and are under the immediate government of these Principles, *i. e.* such as the Cause is, the Effects must be; and as the Spring is, the Streams are.

1. But for those Works on which the new Knowledg and Affections cannot be supposed to have any such powerful and immediate influence, they are not so presently changed; those I mean, that are so independant on the Understanding and Will, that they are done without the particular direction of the one, and the express consent of the other: Indeed it does not seem that a Change in the Understanding and Will does at all infer a Change in them.

2. Those Actions that do depend on, and derive from our Knowledg and Choice in general; yet if they fall not within the compass of this particular knowledg of what is morally Good and Bad; so long they will not be the Objects of that Love and

and Hatred which is directed by this Knowledg. — And so long they may be done or not done without, nay in some sort against our Knowledg and Will.

Now thus it is, where either we do not know in the general, or do not think in particular and actually that this is, suppose a Vertuous good Action, or that is sinful and wicked.

3. It is still more to be presumed, that the change of these Actions will not immediately follow upon the change of the Understanding or Will, in reference to Moral Good and Evil, where by custom or any other way, they are become easy and pleasant to us, where the very doing them is delightful, and that to which we have a disposition; for that will always be an inducement to the Soul to do them: And if it either does not know, or does at that time forget them to be evil, this Disposition will weigh down the Ballance: Nay, sometimes though a Man has some certain knowledg of the evil of an Action, yet if this be not a very through-perswasion, and the hatred that arises from it, great; the sense of Pleasure in doing that Action will out-weigh.

This may give some satisfaction as to the first Particular, whether an immediate Change be to be expected in all the Actions a Man does presently upon that love of Goodness, and hatred of Vice, which arises from such Knowledg as ordinarily true Penitents have.

As

As to the second Query, Whether this Alteration, whenever it is, be compleat?

To this I answer; That it is not perfect here, but is daily going on, and growing up to Perfection.

The Scripture, and our own Experience of our selves, and observation of others, do assure us of the Truth of the first part of this Answer.—— Besides, It is most evident to our Reason: For unless our knowledge of the evil of Sin, and of all that is Sin, were as perfect as ever it will, as it can be, our hatred of it will not rise to its greatest height; and if so, it's impossible that those Actions which wholly derive from these Principles, should be as perfect, *i. e.* that we should keep at that distance from these wicked Practices now, which we shall, when they are better understood, and more heartily hated.

But yet, though there be not a perfect Reformation of Manners at first and suddenly, yet it is growing, — there is that seed of Eternal Life sown, which though it seem small at first, will become a great Tree; and though its Roots be low, its top will reach to Heaven; and it will spread out its branches, so as all the Actions of the whole Man will be covered by them. It is a penetrating thing, a subtil Spirit, that will diffuse it self into the whole Soul and Body, and into all the Faculties and Actions of both.

Before I proceed, I will consider a little more particularly that Expression which I used in the Description, *viz.* That this Reformation is in the practice and course of our Lives, which as on the one hand, it signifies more than, 1. Knowledge of what is Good and Evil. Or, 2. Affection about it. Or 3. Meer averſation to Evil, and inclination to Good. Or, 4. Resolution againſt the one, or for the other. Or 5. Some ſingle abſtinences from Sin, or good performances: for none of, nor all theſe do amount to practice. — So on the other hand, it is leſs than Perfection — than all and every Action, as the general, or that which is for the moſt part is leſs than the univerſal, or that which is always done.

No humble Man will pretend, that every action which he does is good. For, not only in ſome, but in many things, we offend all; and there is no Man that ſins not. And yet there is no true Penitent, no truly good Man, but in the courſe and tenor of his Actions, in the main of his Practice, for the moſt part he does well; and tho in many he offends, yet not in moſt; but if all his Actions be numbred, there will be found more of them good than bad; and if every ſingle Action be weigh'd, tho it be imperfect, yet there is more of Good than of Evil, of Vertue than of Vice in it.

This may ſuffice for the firſt particular, *viz.* What that change is, which Repentance ſpeaks, *viz.* a change of all our Actions, but that is not wrought immediately, Time

is required. Nor is it so perfect here, as that no additions can be made, --- that we can do no better than we do, --- but yet it is such an Alteration, as that after this change the good Actions of our Lives do out-number, and out-weigh the bad, and the goodness of those good Actions, does exceed the defects and evils of them.

How and by
what means
these Effects
are wrought.

2. Proceed we now to the manner how, and the means by which this Reformation is wrought. Concerning this, it will not be enough to say, that where there is such a change in the Soul, as is now supposed, there all the other Passions will be excited; there Men will be engaged to make very hearty Resolutions against Sin and Wickedness, and for Vertue; there they will be stirred up to use their utmost care and diligence, and to exert all their power to avoid Evil, and to do well.

Now, where Men are once in earnest to leave off an evil Course; and do indeed design and resolve to live virtuously; this will have a mighty efficacy on their ways.

And first, for those Works that are more notoriously bad; such as they know and think to be so, and hate from their hearts; if they do wholly, or mostly depend on their knowledg and choice, they will presently break off from them. They, who are thus inwardly changed, will be so watchful over their ways, that no Action can lightly slip from them through negligence and

and incogitancy, which are grossly and palpably evil, --- they will well and often consider their ways, they will mark and observe them, as Scripture expresses it; and if there be any way of wickedness, they will turn from it, and walk in the ways everlasting.

And for those Actions that are not so much in Man's power, nor so fully at his dispose; yet if they be observ'd by the Soul to be vicious, though they be but the beginnings and occasions of Vice, such as vain Imaginations, foolish Thoughts; or the remaining effects of sinful Practices, as are some Dispositions in the Bodily or Animal part of Man, to a repetition of those Actions in which he had formerly transgressed. --- Tho these prevent all deliberation, and are without our consent, yet in this case the Soul is so troubled, that it will do its utmost towards the mending of these Irregularities.

It will most fervently Pray to God for his help to rid it of every evil inclination; and will not be wanting in most hearty and vigorous endeavours, and in the most prudent management of it self in such manner, as that by degrees it may be rescued from that wretched state, wherein it does not the good it would; and does the evil it would not; as *St. Paul* expresses it, *Rom. 7.* where he represents the Man that is under the legal Dispensation, and compares him with a Disciple of Christ; or compares the two Dispensa-

tions under the Persons of these two Men.

To conclude this ; He who knows, and sees, and abhors such Evils as are done without his consent, will, as I said, not only cry to God for succour against them, but will use his own wisest and most earnest endeavours to be rid of them : As he will cut off all unnecessary occasions of them, fly from all Temptations to them, watch to prevent them ; Discipline his Body, so as that it shall not minister Fuel to them : So he will especially endeavour to encrease in all Goodness, that his inclinations to that may prevail against all others ; and that his Soul may be so engaged in the practices of Vertue, that it may not be vacant for such extravagancies as these. And particularly, he takes care to grow stronger in Faith, in Faith which is in God, because he observes, that as it grows stronger, all perverse and evil Thoughts and Inclinations grow weaker ; and that, as the Scripture speaks, not only the Life, but the Heart is purified by Faith. I will not enlarge farther on this particular, but proceed to the third and last.

3. That there is no Repentance where there is not an amendment of Life, is very evident from the Scripture, which when it calls to Repentance, calls to this ;

Isa. 1. Cease to do Evil, learn to do well, wash ye, put away the evil of your doings.
The Scripture indeed bids us weep and mourn,

mourn, and bewail our Abominations ; and fast and pray, and humble, and hate our selves, -- but this is not all, It requires us to *turn from our iniquity, -- to break off our Sins by Righteousness.* If we be doers of Iniquity, whatever our Knowledg or Desires are, -- if this be the main of our Practice, -- if we live sinfully, --- if Wickedness and Vice may give name to our Lives, our Saviour will not own us. No Knowledg, no Faith, no good Inclinations, no ineffectual Purposes ; nothing less than a good Life, a Vertuous, Holy Practice will find acceptance with our Judg, who has declared, That he will give to all Men according to their Works ; -- And that to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for it, he will give Eternal Life ; but they that obey not the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness, shall have Tribulation and Anguish, they shall not see Life.

For farther Confirmation of this we may add, That Reformation of Life and Practice, is the end of all those inward changes of the Soul ; so that in vain are those first Wheels set right, unless the secondary Motions also follow, and be directed by them. 'Tis to no purpose that those Fountains are cleans'd and made sweet, unless the Streams that flow from them, be also better'd : So that if we suppose a Change in the Heart, but not in the Life, we suppose a maim'd, imperfect thing ; 'tis no better than an Abortion ; 'tis a means that does not attain its end.

Whosoever repents, not only thinks, and desires, and resolves to do well, but whenever he has opportunity, he does well: He does not say, I will not be intemperate, I will not slander, I will worship God; but he performs his purpose, and does what he said and thought he would do.

Repentance a
continued
goodness of
Life.

The last thing to be added is, concerning the duration and continuance of this,-- 'tis to abide for ever.

This knowledge of the Good of Holiness, and Evil of Sin, is to be the permanent persuasion of the Soul; and the Hatred of Sin, and Love of Vertue is to stay there. --- 'Tis no fleeting, transient Passion that will constitute that Repentance which is to Life; but it is a continual Abhorrence of Sin, and Love of Vertue. -- It must be a constant, persevering Goodness of Life; not only an Holy-day, but a Work-day, an every-day Goodness; nor only thus for a time, but for alway.--

He that repents indeed, keeps the Commandments always, even to the End, which whosoever does not, but does Good by fits and starts, and at some seldom times, or for a space only, and then breaks off from it, and returns to his former wicked practice, he does not repent in the Scripture account; he indeed repents of his Repentance, and he shall certainly fall short of those Benefits which are promised to the Penitent, *Ezek. 18. 24. If the Righteous turn from his Righteousness, &c. shall he live? all his Righteousness that he has done shall not be*
men-

mentioned: in his *Trespass* that he has *trespas'd*, and in his *Sin* that he has *sinn'd*, in them shall he die. Nay, not only so, but the Scripture intimates that it shall be worse with him that thus turns again to Folly. And therefore St. Peter says, 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21. *If after they have escaped the Pollutions of the World, they are again intangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning; for it had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, &c.*

Having thus considered Gospel-Repentance, and shew'd it to be in general, a through Change, a Change both of Heart and Life; a Reformation that is general, tho not universal; an amendment of all kinds, tho not of all and every thing in particular; of most, though not of all, which though it be not compleat and perfect, yet is sincere and real; and tho it be not all finish'd presently, yet it will be by degrees, and in time; for 'tis daily growing, and therefore must needs abide and continue alway. Before I proceed to the Reasons and Grounds of this, I will point to some mistakes, which some are apt to fall into about this matter; in which I shall endeavour to undeceive those that err, or else to prevent their Erring, by inferring from what I have said is Repentance, what is not, which yet is thought to be.

And this is a matter of great moment indeed. For whoever has taken up a false
 Removal of
 some mistakes
 about Repen-
 tance.

notion of Repentance, and thinks that to be it which is short of, which is only part, or some accident it may be of it, he deceives himself dangerously; for by this means he flatters himself as if he were safe from his Sin, when he is fast held in the Bonds of Iniquity, and shall, if he continue as he is, unavoidably fall under Condemnation for it. That I may prevent or remove such mischievous mistakes; I will, on supposition that I have given the true and Scripture-notion of Repentance, conclude that the several particulars I am about to name, are not that Repentance to Life, however they may by some be mistaken. As,

1. It is not Confession to a Priest at some set-times; Though I open my Heart never so much to him, and tell him all I think or know by my self; tho I acquaint him not only with my Works, but with my very Inclinations and Thoughts, with all my Designs and Purposes; tho I make as full and free a Confession as any ever did, or can do; yet this will not pass for the Repentance on which I may expect Pardon from God. Nay, and tho the Priest do, and must, according to his Order and Rule, absolve me; yet if I have no more than this to shew for my Repentance; I cannot promise my self that God will forgive me; Nay, I may be sure he will not.

The Confessor often absolves where God does not; and God many times pardons, where

where the Priest condemns — Yet I would not be mistaken, as if I went about to dissuade you from Confession to your Spiritual Guides in some Cases, far be this from me, who know that this may be, and has been of good use, where it has been practis'd seriously and discreetly : But this I must declare, that it is neither ordinarily necessary, in order to our Pardon from God, nor is it much less sufficient, and all that is necessary to obtain it.

How miserably then are they deluded, who rely on their Sacerdotal Confession for the Pardon of their Sins ; and think they have now repented when they have confessed them ; and that they may expect all that which in the Gospel is promised to the true Penitent ? We have learned out of the Scripture, that Reformation is something more than this ; something that may be where Confession is not made to any Man ; and that may not be there where Men do confess.

2. Tho there be a submission to, yea and a willing undergoing of Penance imposed by the Priest, or any Man or company of Men whatsoever ; Tho I should Fast, or Watch, or go a Pilgrimage, or pay a great Summ of Money, or part with my Children, or endure Whippings and Tortures in my Flesh ; nay, or give up my Life for the Service of the Church, tho I give my Body to be Burn'd. -- Yet all this does not amount to Repentance ; all this may be done, where Men repent not ; and Men

do Repent, and are Accepted with God where none of this is done. If any be under such a mistake as this, they may rectify their Thoughts out of the Prophet *Micah* 6. 6, 7, 8. *Wherewith, &c.*

3. Nor is Confession of Sin to God himself, Repentance; No, tho it be perform'd with more solemnity and seriousness, than Confession to a Priest can be supposed to be, yet Forgiveness is not promised to this.

It is true, that Confession must and will be made to God, where-ever Men do truly Repent: So that this is to be done, but it's a part, not all, that they are to do. Therefore we find, *Prov.* 28. 13. That it is joined with forsaking Sin; *He that covers his Sin, saith the Wise Man, shall not prosper; but he that Confesses and Forsakes, shall find Mercy.* If a Man does not Confess his Sin to God, he is without all hope; but neither will his Confession singly avail him, he must forsake it also.

Let therefore my Confession to God be never so full and free; never so sensible and serious, never so constant and frequent; yet if it be not accompanied with that Change and Amendment which has been declared, it is not that Repentance which God will accept.

4. Nor does Repentance consist in any Abstinences or Non-compliances with natural Desires in any severities to my Body, or Disciplinary Exercises; tho I take them
up

up of mine own Will, and they are not imposed by any other.

These, so far as they have any good effect on me, as they tend to rectify what is wrong, to mend what is amiss, to bring me into a true natural State, to regulate and reform, not to destroy and overthrow my Nature (as too oft they do,) so far they are of use. But they are far from being that Repentance to which at the best they are but Helps; and sometimes they are Hindrances; so that they are only uncertain Signs of it.

I may Fast twice a Week, as the *Pharisees* did; I may macerate my Flesh with burdensom Exercises, and painful Severities; I may eat and drink by Weight; I may watch often; I may deny my self whatever is pleasant to me, and yet I may not be dead to Sin, tho I be to almost all things else; I may not have forsaken my Evil ways, tho I have my Meat; I perhaps have not by all this so much mended and reform'd, as destroy'd my Nature.

5. Nor is this Repentance a meer Conviction of Sin, of the Evil of it, and of mine own Guilt; 'tis not a bare knowledg that it is an evil thing to Sin against God, and that I have broken his Laws, and am thereby become obnoxious to the Judgment of God. The Devils, I doubt not, are under such Convictions as these; they know that they have violated the Laws of Heaven; and that by their Sin they have made themselves liable to everlasting Miseries; but

but yet they repent not : No more do those Men who know that they have sinn'd, and what their Sin deserves ; but this their Knowledg goes no further , has no effects upon them ; does not alter their Wills, nor mend their Lives ; they do not cease to love and practise that Sin which they know makes them liable to the Wrath of God.

Nor does Repentance consist in a bare Speculation of the Goodness of Vertue ; Tho' a Man think and be perswaded that Vertue is an excellent thing ; tho' he believe all that good of it which any one can say ; tho he may reason himself into an Assent to this, that the Vertue which is despised and slighted in the World, and which himself has sometimes undervalued, is very good and highly valuable ; yet if this his Perswasion has no farther effect, if it be alone, if his Will and Inclinations be as they were before, and he lives the same Life he did ; his Understanding will be of no avail ; there is a Change there indeed, but because it is no where else, it will signify nothing to our Acceptance ; it is not that Change which the Scripture calls Repentance.

6. Nor is it Sorrow for having committed Sin. For a very great Sorrow on the account of Sin, may be in an Unrepenting Soul ; and the Man who is really troubled at his having done wickedly, may yet repeat those very Actions for which he is troubled.

Now,

Now, assuredly no Man whose Soul is not changed, and whose Life is not better'd, can be said to repent. Sorrow is a Passion that may be occasion'd by a very confused and uncertain Knowledg; nay it may be raised by mistaken Apprehensions and false Reasonings. Now, if our Sorrow for Sin be such, it is of no account with God; as indeed, no Passion is of any value with him that is founded in Ignorance, or ill-reasoning.

But besides, a Man may be troubled that he has sinn'd on such accounts as these.

1. Either he has suffer'd in his Temporal Interest, has sustain'd Loss in his Estate by Idleness or Prodigality: Or, has lost his Credit by his Injustice and Dishonesty. Or,

2. He has some confused Fears, that he shall one way or other suffer by it; that the Curse of God will follow him in this Life; or however that it will overtake him at Death, and he shall be miserable in another World.

But yet all this is not enough to take him off from the liking and practice of this Sin; he is troubled for the ill consequents of his Sin, which he feels or fears, but he still loves it; and nothing does make him cease from the commission of it. He is troubled indeed, but it is because he is, or must be punish'd; not because he has sin'd; Or, if it be for that, yet it seems he still chuses to sin with all the Sorrow consequent on it, rather than to forbear it.

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This is that I say, there may be a great Sorrow for having committed Sin, rais'd in the Soul that is not truly convinced, nor certainly perswaded of its Evil, nor does indeed hate it ; nor does it cause a Reformation of Life, and then it may be, where Repentance is not. Have we not met with those, who have not only express'd, but had a great Sorrow for their past Wickedness ; and yet they have immediately return'd to the same Follies which they have so much lamented ? This is a plain proof, that Men may both have Love and Sorrow for the same Sin.

Much less should we think that any one repents, who makes great Signs, and gives great Expressions of Sorrow, Tears, frow Looks, Sighs, &c. For these are much the effects of a Bodily Temper, and accompany the lesser Grievings. It is almost impossible for a Man not to have some Regret, some Trouble, when he thinks he has sin'd, which will vent it self in the usual ways ; but this may consist with a secret liking of Sin it self, and with a continuance in it.

7. Neither do I make the whole of Repentance to lie in the change of any one single Passion, nor of all the Passions together, not arising from good Understanding, and having no influence to reform the Practice.

Even hatred of Sin, and love of Goodness (which include and infer all the other Passions) yet if they do not rise from, and be
not

not directed by Knowledg —and if they do not mend the Life, I have shewn them to be of no Consideration in this Matter : if therefore the Passions be changed, but the Understanding is the same, and the Life no better, this is no Repentance.

8. The same must be said of Purposes to break off a Course of Sin, and Resolutions to live vertuously. When Men come to this, they think the Business is done; and indeed it is in a fair way-- but yet how often have Men resolved to do what they never did? And how few are there that have not at one Time or other, nay, often resolved to live a good Life, and yet how few have been true to these Resolutions?

Purposes founded on Passion, or Mistake and Ill-reasoning, on a present Temper of Body, or some sudden inconsider'd Thoughts, 'tis to be expected, that they should be as quickly broken, as they were rashly made; nor is it to be thought, that they will have any lasting Effect on our Lives---And those Purposes which neither derive from good Understanding, nor are productive of good Life, but are without good Effect, as well as without good Cause, cannot be that Repentance to which the Scripture promises Mercy.

And we must have the same Consideration of Desires, that we have of Purposes to repent. There is a Doctrine in vogue with some, That a Desire of Grace is Grace---He that desires Faith has it, and he that desires

fires to be holy is holy.--- But however this being set off with a seeming subtilty, may pass for currant, with those who are inclined to believe it; yet I think it not worth while to say any more to this Mistake, but pass from it to the next :

9. Some Aversions to Vice, and Inclinations to Vertue. These I distinguish from Repentance, as I have done several of the Particulars named, that is, as Parts from the whole : These are, indeed, Dispositions to, Beginnings and Parts of Repentance, but they are not all. Few Men are born into the World, but, I believe, they bring with them some Remainder of that Rectitude in which God made Man. But alas ! how are these hopeful Beginnings soon spoiled ? How are they for the most part ineffectual ? Here are the first Motions of Life ; but alas ! they are stifled and prove abortive ; if they be not supported by good Knowledg, and maintain'd by Exercise, they cease : or if they continue, they are of no Worth, they will not stand for Repentance. No, nor

10. Practice and Life, if it be alone ; if the Soul be not changed, if it have the same love to Sin which it had ; though it should happen, that a Man do other Actions than he did, and has altered his Course and Way, yet if his Mind be the same, he is still the same impenitent Man which he was.

Can any one think him to repent, who, though he does better, yet wishes to do as ill as ever ? His Course is changed, but his Choice is the same. He has altered his Practice,

ctice, but not his Thoughts and Designs, as the Scripture requires: *Let the wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts.* It is not he that has made this Change, but Time : His Body is now unfit for those Services to which he formerly put it : it is incapable of those Gratifications which he formerly indulged it--- or Company has moulded him--and he has been wholly passive, has not co-operated at all in this Change, or it has not been made out of good Judgment and free Choice--- In short, it has no ways depended on, or been consequent to the Change made in his Understanding and Will. It is not from any Conviction of the Evil of Sin, or Perswasion of the Good of Holiness, not from Hatred of the one, and Love of the other, that he lives better.

11. Nor though a Man from these very Principles, do a few single good Acts, or in some Instances abstain from Sin, may he therefore be thought to repent, *i. e.* so as to find Mercy with God, and to have all his Sins pardoned.

Nothing less than a vertuous Practice, a good Course of Life, a Tenour of holy Actions, will in the Scripture-sense denominate a Man to be a true Penitent. Tho a man may do many good things, if he do not most, how can he be call'd a good Man? And with what unused an Impropriety of Speech, and how untruly must he be said to have repented of his former Life, who for
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the main, and most of his Actions, goes on to do as he did before ?

Thus I have shewn, that 'tis not the Amendment of this, or that, or of any one, or some, or divers Things in Man, that is necessary to Repentance. Nor is a Change of all that is in Man sufficient, without the Reformation of his Life, and not of some single Works, but of the most of his Actions ; his Practice must be changed, else he is not in Scripture-Account a true Penitent. I add one more,

12. That all this must continue. For tho we could suppose a Man never so much altered, and his Life amended, yet all this will not avail to Salvation, unless it abide. For he that is most thoroughly washed from his Wickedness, if he return to his wallowing in the Mire, will be as filthy as ever. His former washing is now to no purpose ; Nay, as has been shewn before, as it aggravates his Sin, so it increases his Misery.

Let Men, therefore, take heed of such a Mistake as this, that Repentance is over, that they have done it. Let me tell every one, that unless he do repent, he has not repented : And unless he continue in the same Perswasion of the Evil of Sin, in the same Hatred to it, Sorrow for it, Resolution against it, and that in the whole Course of his Life he forsakes it to the End, all that passed before will be of no Account ; the same good Temper and Frame of Mind, the same vertuous Course and Tenor of Life must continue to the last, if he hope to receive the

the Mercy promised to true Repentance. It is not the Work of an Hour, of a Day, or of a Lent--- It is the Work of every Day, and of all the Days of our Life.

Let them consider well of this, who think they are to repent once for all, and that some one Time in their Life will serve turn. And let them also attend to it, who, tho they will allow more Times than one, have their Set-times every Year, which they allot to Repentance, yet think it needless to be in the Exercise of it every Day--- Whereas in that large and complex Notion which the Scripture gives of it, and under which it is there considered as the Means of Salvation, it is a Change both of the Man, and of his Works for the better--- And such a Change as is constant and abiding, and remains to the End--- I must in the use of my Understanding continually hate, and cease from Sin, continually love and practise Virtue.

Thus I have shewed divers of the most dangerous and common Mistakes that Men have about Repentance, by describing it according to the Scripture-Notion of it, when it is made the Condition of Forgiveness, and of Eternal Life.

It may seem strange to some, that I have been so long in explaining what I mean by Repentance. I give this account:

1. That I think I ought to be very careful and exact in shewing what those Duties are, to which I exhort: For else Men

Why Repentance should be explained exactly.

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will

will be moved to do they know not what. And it may be considered, Whether this has not been one Cause why Sermons have so little good Effect, that either Men are not told, or do not mind sufficiently what it is that they are perswaded to. And when Mens Affections are in Motion, but not under the Conduct of Knowledg, whither may not, whither have they led not them?

2. I would especially be careful in explaining such a Duty, as is the Condition of all that we hope for. There is none but must desire an accurate Knowledg of that, without which he cannot be happy.

I might also have said, that this Change is still a making; it does not stand at a stay, it is not at an End whilst we are here. But because we are not always so sensible of it after the first Beginning, when it is a doing, as after it is done; as we perceive not how, nor when we grow, I shall therefore omit it--

Arguments
and Motives to
repent.

Having declared what the Scriptures mean by *Repentance unto Life*, I now proceed to those Grounds and Reasons, Arguments and Motives, whereby we should be perswaded and engaged unto it; *i. e.* to use our utmost care to give all diligence, that we may repent; which if we do, the Grace of God will not be wanting. God is very often before-hand with us, and many Times he prevents our earliest Endeavours, but he always seconds and assists them. And whoever does but suspect that he will not, has unworthy thoughts of God.

This I thought good here to insert, that
none

none might be discouraged from setting himself to do that, which he will see very reasonable and fit, meerly out of Apprehension, that he of himself is insufficient, that he cannot repent if he would.-- And out of Doubtfulness, that God will not help him-- The first I grant, that we of our selves are not sufficient-- but let none imagine, that God is not more forward to assist our Weakness, than we are to desire it. This which he has already done, is a Pledg of what he will farther do; that is, if he has made us to will and desire it, this should assure our Hopes, that he will go on to work in us to do, as he has done to will. And if we do not stifle these first Beginnings, and by stupid Dulness, or wilful Perverseness, not comply with, or resist and oppose these first Motions, but hearken to, and obey them; he will most certainly perfect what he has begun, and enable us to do what he has moved us to desire to do.

Having thus taken notice of, and I think, said enough to remove this Stumbling-block out of the Way: I now offer some of those Considerations which may move and persuade us to repent. As, 1. It becomes us. 2. It's a Thing of great Benefit and Advantage. 3. It is absolutely and indispensably necessary.

1. This Repentance and Reformation highly becomes us: As will appear, if we consider, 1. Several Inclinations, Tendencies, and Actions that are natural to us. Or, 2. the Dispensations of Divine Providence,

Argument 1st.
It becomes us.

dence, under which we are. Or, 3. what is just and right. For it well becomes us to comply with our own Natures, in doing all that which by them we are disposed to do. And we cannot but think it fit, that we should so correspond with the Dispensations of God's Providence, as to answer his Call, and to serve his Ends. Also we must judge all that is just and right, to become us. On all these Accounts it will appear, that it is very becoming and fit, that we should change our Minds, and amend our Lives in such manner as has been described.

It becometh us
in respect of
ourselves.

1. It is agreeable to our Natures, that we should judge truly, and chuse wisely, that our Wills should follow our Understandings, and our Affections be duly proportioned to the good, or evil of Things; and that our Behaviour and Carriage should be the proper Result and Issue of a good and right Mind; of a Will and Affections that are under the Conduct of a well-informed, and a true Understanding.

That this is agreeable to human Nature, none will deny, but they who mistake the Depravation and Corruption of it, for our true Nature; and call that only natural, which is the Degeneracy of Nature, and the most contrary to it. But we who believe that God made Man in a good State at first, and that, notwithstanding the Apostacy, there are yet some Remainders of that primitive Perfection, look on that as natural, which is agreeable to the Condition in which we were first made, and to those Re-

Reliques of that State, which in this Degeneracy we still retain. And whatever is opposite, and is not according to that, we esteem unnatural.

Now assuredly our great Creator has so formed us, that we should judge truly of Things-- And therefore has he implanted in us a vehement Thirst after Knowledge and Truth; and furnish'd us with several Abilities and Helps, whereby we might attain to it, insomuch that we need not be either grossly ignorant, or mistaken about the greatest and best, the most useful and excellent Things, especially Vertue and Vice--- Matters of greatest Moment to us to know. Our own, and every Man's Observation and Reasonings will lead him to a right Understanding of these Things.

Again; We are so made, that unless our Wills comply with our Understandings, and that we be directed in our Choices by our Judgments, we act most unnaturally. Of this we are sensible by the Uneasiness and Regret which we feel in our selves, that arises from such an Intestine Discord as this.

I need add no more to prove the Affections and Actions consequent on such a well-directed Will to be natural to us. Every one will suppose, that a well-inform'd Mind, governing it self, and the lower Faculties of our Nature, according to its best Knowledge, is most agreeable to us as we came out of the Hands of God-- And that the Opposite to this is the most unnatural, con-

tranatural Thing that can be. And if this be so, as most certainly it is, then is also the Repentance, which Scripture calls us to, the most natural, and consequently the best becoming us.

For it is nothing in general, but the Recovery of our Minds from Ignorance and Mistake, to Truth and Knowledge. It is the Return of a rebellious Will and Affections to their natural Subjection and Allegiance: It is the regulating our Actions in such a manner, as our wise Maker intended; that is, That we think Sin and its Consequents worse than any other Evil, which we either do, or can suffer: And Vertue, with its Attendants, far better than all other Good Things that can stand in Competition with it. Now this is most true and evident, as will appear to every one that will review his own undoubted Experience of himself, or most exact Observation of others; the best and surest Reasonings which he makes of his own Nature, and of the Notions which he has of Good and Evil-- the creditable Testimony of all Sorts of Men in all Ages, and not to mention especially the Divine Oracles, I appeal to all these, if we will but be concluded by them, for Satisfaction in this Truth, *viz.* That Sin is the worst, and Vertue the best of all Things.

I must not now insist on these Things, only let it be consider'd, Whether the Trouble which you have from Remorse for Sin, be not the most piercing and inward, the most constant and lasting, and unavoidable

able of all the Troubles which you have undergone? — Whether any outward Loss, nay, or bodily Sickness, do cause such a Sorrow as this, which yet is no other than what Nature it self disposes us unto?

Now this is a Discovery of the Sense, and as I may call it, Judgment of human Nature concerning Sin. On the other Hand, What greater Satisfaction or Pleasure do we perceive, than in doing, or having done some vertuous good Actions? All the Gratifications of a sensual Appetite are nothing, in Comparison with this, they are but momentary, and vanishing, they are mixed, and for most part are followed with bitter Grievs—— But the Pleasures of well-doing are pure and uncompounded, constant and unalterable; Time does not wear them out, they are always fresh, there is nothing that accompanies, or follows them, that gives them any Allay. Is not this also the Voice to Nature, and its Testimony to Vertue, which since it affords us the chiefest Joy, must needs be the best Good.

I must be very large, if I should go on in the rest of the Particulars, to make out this Truth, but I need not be at the Pains; I may trust every one that considers, with the Management of this Matter, That Sin with its Consequents, is the worst of all Things, and Vertue the best. Suppose we then at present this (which I have shewn how it may be proved) we plainly see, that Repentance is only the reforming our Ignorance, the rectifying our Mistakes, that whereas

we thought before that Sin was very good, or not evil, or not very evil, we are now undeceived — and see that it is necessarily and unalterably mischievous, that it does most irreparable Hurt at present, that it will, if continued in, plunge us into the Depth of all Wo and Misery.

Thus it appears, that that Part of Repentance which consists in the better information of the Understanding concerning Sin and Vertue, is very agreeable to Nature. For it is nothing but the Souls being rescued out of Ignorance and Error, into Knowledg and Truth.

And it is no less sutable to a natural State, that the Soul being convinced of the Evil of Sin, should have an Hatred of, and Aver-sation to it; and that it should have an Affection, an Inclination and Love to Vertue, which it thinks and knows to be good.

This is natural to us on two Accounts:
 1. In that we are so framed as to be directed in our Choices, and the Determinations of our selves by our understanding and knowledg of Good and Evil, --- especially of what is morally Good and Evil, because this is Man's proper Good and Evil, and consequently the greatest of all other to him. And,
 2ly. we naturally have an aver-sation to evil, and Propension to good; we hate the one, and love the other; and this in proportion to the Good or Evil which we apprehend; --- therefore we look on it as unnatural, and indeed monstrous, to love that which we know is Evil, and to hate that which we think

think Good.—— Hence it appears natural for us to hate Sin and love Vertue, when we once esteem the one to be evil, and the other good. And whoever by ill and inveterate Custom is induced to approve and chuse that Way or Course which he knows to be evil, nay, the worst of Evils, vicious and wicked, is justly censured to act like a Mad-man ; He is truly distracted, he looks one Way, and goes another. And it is no less monstrous to act contrary to our Choice, to do the Evil we hate, or not to do the Good we love.

The Sum of this Discourse is this : If it be natural to maintain this Order among our Faculties, that the inferior be subject to our Wills, and they under the Guidance of our Understandings ; if it be natural to the Understanding to judge truly as the Understanding tends to Truth, so the Will does to that which is Good. If it be natural to prefer the greater Good before the less, and to pursue Pleasure, and to fly from Pain and Trouble, then is Repentance very natural ; and if so, then it well-becomes us.

If it be objected, that Repentance is difficult and painful, and therefore not natural. I make this easie Reply. 1. Every Work and Way how natural soever, is hard and troublesome at first : And the better and higher any Work is, the more difficult is it also in the Beginning. 2ly. It is its Contrariety to Custom, and not Nature, that makes it seem grievous.--- For Custom, be it in a Thing never so unnatural, makes it easie and

and pleasant; therefore it must be hard to oppose, to break this. A Man that has been sick or lame, cannot walk, or exercise, without some Pain; and yet this is natural, and 'tis the Way to his Recovery. It is therefore no Argument, that Repentance is not according to Nature, because at the first it is difficult and painful.

It becometh us
in respect of
God.

2. It well-becomes us to correspond with such Dispensations of Providence as we are under, and to be obedient to God's Will in them; *i.e.* to endeavour the attaining that End, which God by them designs. If we do thus, we shall leave off our evil Ways, and become good Men.

This might appear from a Consideration of all God's dealings with us. For the great end of them all, is manifestly to make us good. But at present I shall only refer to the Gospel-administration, under which we are.

Now the Gospel-administration does so evidently aim at our Amendment, and living good Lives; and does so loudly call to us to forsake Sin, that none can doubt it. However, give me leave to be a little particular, and you will discern by the few Things I shall mention, that if we do indeed co-operate with, and under God, and comply with this his Method, we shall repent. For,

1. We have here a more clear and full Discovery of what is our Duty, and what is Sin, than Men had before. Our Saviour has by his Doctrine and Practice, given us

us a more large and particular Knowledge of what we ought, and what we ought not to do.

2. Here is given us a more certain Assurance of the most pernicious Evil of Sin, and of the great Goodness of Vertue, than Mankind had before; both by the terrible Threatnings that are denounced against Sin, and the most excellent Promises that are made to Holiness.

Besides these, our blessed Saviour's Life and Death puts this out of all doubt--- For his most holy Life shews what his Esteem of Goodness was: And his dying on the Cross that he might expiate for our Sins, doth sufficiently declare his Thoughts of Sin. He thought it worse than Death: And we are sure he was not deceived.

Now if we consider no more, is it not plain from hence, That God, by his Gospel, designs to bring Men to Repentance? To what purpose else does he give us this clearer Knowledge of our Duty, if it be not that we may do it? Or, for what end does he so manifest the Evil of Sin, but that we may avoid it? When he gave up his own Son to dye for Sin, was it not that he might hereby make us hate, and fear that which was the Cause of so great Sufferings to the Son of God? Nor could we be delivered from the dire Effects of it, but in such a Method as this. Besides this, I add;

3. Repentance is most plainly commanded under the Gospel-administration; John the Baptist, our Saviour himself, his Apostles,
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all require this, however God might in former times of Ignorance not seem to call so earnestly for it, yet now he commands all Men every where to repent, &c.

4. This Command is established on the greatest Sanctions—— so I call not only the Penalty denounced on the Neglect, but the Promise made to the performance of it. No less than eternal Misery is there declared to be the Consequent of Impenitence. And if our Hearts and Ways are made better, so that we love and practise Vertue in the Course, and to the End of our Life, we shall not fail of the Pardon of Sin, and of everlasting Happiness.

Does not all this aim at our Amendment? And if we do amend, do we not comply with God's Design in the Gospel? But if we continue as vicious and wicked as we were, as others that have not been blessed with the Gospel-revelation, do we not then receive the Grace of God in vain? Do we not what in us lies to frustrate the Divine Counsels, and make them of no Effect?

And this does very ill beseem us, when the Divine Wisdom has design'd our Amendment; and in Order thereto has instructed us, so fully what he would have us do, and given us such unanswerable Arguments from the Authority and the Example of our Saviour, from his most glorious Promises, by which he has encouraged our Hopes, and his most severe Threats for the awakening our Fears, that if we act like Men, they must prevail with us. After all this that
God

God has done for us, to continue as we were, would be very unbecoming.

Let us collect the force of this into one. What, has God given thee a clear knowledge of what thou shouldst do, and wilt thou do as thou didst, when thou wast, or as others, who are ignorant? Did God set up this Light, and wilt thou walk in Darkness? Does he teach thee Wisdom, and wilt thou still be Foolish? Does he shew thee what he would have thee to do, and wilt thou not do it? Wilt thou do the contrary? Surely this Light was given to direct us in the way of our Life; and it would therefore ill become us to shut our Eyes upon it, or to put it under a Bushel; to do what in us lies to extinguish it, and so to frustrate the Merciful Design of God.

Add to this, that the only begotten of the Father came on this very design, to turn us from our Iniquities; for this end he lived amongst us, and died; he did and suffered so much, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity; he was nail'd on the Cross, and shed his Blood, that we by his Stripes might be healed; he thus gave up himself for us, to suffer the greatest Evils, that we might be saved from Sin, and become a peculiar People, zealous of good Works: And now shall we be so unworthy as to defeat the Counsel, to frustrate the undertaking of our Saviour? shall we hinder this Design from taking effect? shall we, as much as in us lies, make all that
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he has done and suffered on our behalf in vain? Shall we go about to baffle the the Wisdom and Goodness of the Father and the Son; and shall the Holy Spirit be resisted and grieved by us? Would we stifle and quench those good Motions of his, whereby he would begin in us the Life of Vertue and Holiness? how unfit, how unseemly, how strange a thing would this be! and yet thus it is where we do not after all this is done, amend our ways. O let not such a thing be said of us, that God would have cleansed us, and we would not.

Again; When God has expressly call'd us to Repentance, and has given us full encouragement that it shall be accepted; this ought to prevail with us. They that were doubtful whether their Sins should be pardon'd, tho' they reformed, might have some Plea for their going on in Sin; but we after all assurance that we shall upon our amendment find Mercy, can make no excuse for our selves. It is then nothing but groundless, senseless Obstinacy, altogether without Reason and unaccountable, the most shameful and unseemly Behaviour that we can possibly use.

From what has been said, appears how fit and seemly it is for us to correspond with Divine Dispensations; which if we do, particularly with the Gospel, we shall forsake our Evil Thoughts and Ways. This I shall shew to be very becoming, yet farther on another account.

3. Because it is just and right so to do. It becomes us because it is fit and just. That to do justly, becomes Man, is confessed by all: And that Repentance is a piece of Justice, cannot be denied; if we consider, that it is a restoring to God that of which by Wickedness we had robb'd him, a giving him his own, which was by Sin withheld from him.

For, surely we are God's, he has all imaginable Titles to us; And we ought to be disposed of by him, to do or suffer, or be whatever is his Will, to obey his Laws, to serve his Designs. But whilst we live in Sin, we do all quite contrary; we run away from our great Master, we quit his Service to which we are bound; we rebel against our Sovereign, we list our selves under his Enemies; and fight against him our Liege Lord.

Now when we repent, we return to our Duty, come back to our own Master. We lay down the unjust Arms we had taken up against our lawful Sovereign; we own our Fault, and implore his Pardon, and wholly resign our selves to his disposal, *i. e.* we make such reparation as we can, of that which by our Sins has been lost; we restore to God as much of his own as we can.

And as this is but Justice in respect of God, so it may go under the same notion in respect of Men: For every wicked Man is unjust to others, to the World; he by his Wickedness injures them, does not the good

good he might and should, and does the evil he should not; so that when he repents, he restores to Mankind that which he had unjustly with-held from them, that is, himself, that Service, and those good Offices whereby he might contribute to their welfare.

Nay, I may say in some sort, that Repentance is Justice done to a Man's own Soul; for surely every one is in some sort indebted to his own self; he ought to rescue his Soul out of Slavery and an unnatural State, is bound to recover his Mind from Diseases, to vindicate it from Fear, and secure it from Danger, and preserve it from Death: All which can be no other way done, than by rescuing himself from a practise and state of Sin: If this be not done, a Man continues most unnaturally unjust to himself.

Thus then Repentance or Reformation is a doing right to God, to the World, to a Man's own self; and on this account also it will become every one.

It is Justice that we should bear our Part, do our Work: the great God does his, and shall we fail in ours? this is manifest Injustice, and attended with very mischievous consequences; for hence it is that we ourselves, that other Men fail of happiness, and God is denied his Glory and most due Praise.

If we should consider farther, that relation in which we stand to God; from
thence

thence also it would appear how fit it is for us to repent on those Accounts. We depend upon him for our Beings, and for all that we have, therefore we ought not to oppose him. But this is all that I shall now say on this Account.

Thus I have endeavoured to perswade to that blessed Change of our selves, which the Scripture calls Repentance, both as to the Beginning and Continuance of it, by shewing that this does become us. And this is a great and prevailing Argument with those that weigh it.

For when I say a Thing becomes me, I plead from that which is proper and peculiar to my Nature, that which is naturally, and necessarily Good; the Want of which is a manifest Defect, a Flaw, a Maim in humane Nature. In somuch that I must look on my self as in an unnatural state, so long as I do what does not become me, or neglect to do what does; and so long I cannot be happy.

I now proceed, secondly, to declare more expressly what was sufficiently implied under that former Particular, *viz.* the great, the numberless Benefits which do accrue upon such a Repentance. When I shew'd, that it highly becomes us, I gave a sufficient Ground to prove it also very beneficial. For no Man ever does a becoming Action, but he is, and feels himself the better for it. I will now declare some of those many Blessings and Advantages which accompany Repentance.

Argument 2d.
from the Benefits and Advantages that flow from thence.

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The reformed Man himself receives much good, and it is not a little that over-flows to other Men. Nay, I may add, that it reaches above the Earth, and Heaven it self is in some sort affected with it.

In respect of
himself, i. e. Par-
don of Sin.

I. Repentance is very beneficial to the Penitent himself: this will appear,

1. In that his Sins are pardoned, *i. e.* he is now no longer under guilt, nor liable to the Punishment of Hell; though the Sins of his Past-life have been very many, and very heinous, yet they shall not be laid to his Charge: he has his Pardon already, and when he comes into Judgment he shall not fall into Condemnation, but be publicly and finally acquitted.

And is not this a most invaluable Blessing? All those who have considered what Sin is, and what it deserves, who believe and fear the Threats which are in Scripture denounced against it; whose Souls have been awakened to an Expectation of the last and dreadful Judgment, and of the Sentence that will then pass on all the obstinately wicked, they must set an high Value on a Pardon; however they who regard not God, and make a Mock at Sin, may slight it.

Think now what we shall all most certainly think at that great and terrible Day, when all the World shall be arraigned before the righteous Judge of Heaven and Earth; when we shall all be required to give a Reason of our Actions, and shall be found guilty of great Offences; how shall we then prize

a Pardon? and what shall we not be willing to part with, that we may escape Condemnation? Certainly, if the whole World was ours, we should most willingly give it in Exchange for a Pardon? But how readily should we undergo the most difficult Task, the hardest Labor, how chearfully undertake the severest Penance, the most rigid Imposition that could be laid upon us, if these were the Terms on which our Judge would acquit us? And why are we not all of the same Mind now, that we shall so shortly be of? Why should not the Fore-consideration of this, whilst we have Time, and it will be to purpose, move and affect us now, as it will do then? We shall then wish we had repented, when we cannot repent, when it will be in vain; why should we not now, when it will be to good purpose, do that which we shall certainly wish we had done, and eternally lament that we have not?

I have represented what Account Men will make of a Pardon when they come to Judgment. Let me add this, that they who have their Sins pardoned, will be in Extasies of Joy, when they see that Hell which they have escaped; when they shall hear themselves acquitted by the Judge of all the World; O what Gladness, what Triumphs must they be in? How joyful must that Sentence be, that absolves them from the Sins of their whole Life?

If the News of a Pardon to a Criminal that is condemned to a Death, that will be

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over

over in half an Hour, be so welcome ; how glad must the poor Sinner be to hear his Lord absolve him from everlasting Wo ?

Thus shall we all judge very shortly of these Matters, and can it be nothing to us now ? Why do we not chuse rather to have our Sins pardoned, than to have all the Happiness besides that the World can give us ? This is the Condition of every one that reforms : though he has sinned with an high Hand, though the Cry of his Wickedness were gone up to Heaven, though he has multiplied Provocations, and they are more than he can number ; yet if this worst of Men has forsaken his evil Ways, and his Thoughts, and Designs that were not good, his Sins shall not rise up in Judgment against him.

There is none who believes a Judgment to come, but must at least wish himself in this Condition ; and therefore confess Repentance, which brings him into it, to be of great Benefit. Would not that be so, which should set you out of the reach of temporal Death ? — How then can you think otherwise of that which puts you out of Danger of that which is infinitely more terrible than Death it self ?

This is the first great Benefit that accrues by Repentance. And this alone may be sufficient to engage every one that has any Sense of God, or of Sin, or of the Fear of Death and Hell, to repent.

2. He that is thus changed for the better, ^{2. Favor of God.} has not only his Sin pardoned, but is re-instated in the Love and Favour of God. He is in the same State in which he was before he sinned, and when he first came out of the Hands of God; he is fully restored to his Prince's Grace and Favour; he is no longer under Displeasure, which yet some Malefactors are, but his Sovereign delights in him; he is not only not hated, but loved; and the great God is so far from designing or doing evil to him, that he intends, and will do him good, the greatest good.

The Parable of the prodigal Son, *St. Luke 15.* does shew the Heart of God to every repenting Sinner. The Father of that extravagant Son was not a thousandth part so forward to meet, so willing to receive, so good and kind to entertain him at his Return, as the Father of Spirits is to every one of his Children, when they leave the Ways wherein they have wandred in the greatness of their Folly, and come home to him. He will be to them a Father, and will deal with them as with Children.

And will not every one say, Happy is the Man that is in this Condition? Will we not pronounce him blessed, who is in the Favour of God? If it be so desirable to us to be the Favourites of earthly Princes, mortal Men, whose Breath is in their Nostrils, how infinitely more valuable is it to be beloved by the King of all the World? How great is the Happiness, how excellent the State of that blessed Man? Surely no Evil

can hurt, none shall come near him. He is provided with, he is possessed of all that is good, since he that can, will do all for him? Thus it is with every one that ceases to do evil, and does well: He is the Person whom the God of Heaven loves, in whom he delights, and to whom he will do all good. Let him have been never so wicked formerly, let him now be hated and despised by Men, let him be never so low and vile in his own Thoughts, yet if he be reclaimed from the Evil of his Ways, if from his Heart he confess and forsake his Sin, and persevere in well-doing, he is greatly beloved of God; that is, he may assure himself of all that Omnipotent Goodness can do for him.

Will not this convince us of the great Benefits which Men receive by Repentance, and engage us to all that Performance which entitles us to such Blessings as these? These Considerations must constrain Men to Reformation, if they will but weigh them, and they will certainly have this Effect on all that will think on them, whose Souls are not sunk down into Atheism and Infidelity.

As many as believe a God, think his Good-Will the most desirable Thing in the World, and will count no Labour too much to obtain it. And how hard soever Repentance be in it self (which yet it is not) if it be the Way to the Love and Favour of God, surely we should most cheerfully undergo it.

3. The Soul of a repenting Sinner is already recovered to a good degree of its true Life and Health, Strength and Liberty; and is on Recovery to greater Measures of these Things. What I now say is a Matter of no Significancy or Sense with them, who know of no other but the brutish Life, nor have any Perception of that Health which belongs not to the Body; nor think of any Liberty besides that where they are not under the Power of other Men.—

3. Recovery
of the Souls
Health.

But most assuredly there is an higher Life than that which brute Animals live, viz. the Life of the Souls of Intelligents of an higher Order; a Life which they live who are capable of Vertue and Vice, of knowing and loving God and Goodness. And this Life consists in Understanding and Wisdom, in Vertue and Holiness—And the more of these, and the more they encrease, the more healthy is the State of the Soul, the more Vigour and Strength it has: The more Liberty also it has, if that be Liberty *vivere ut velis*—For a Man is never so free, so much at his own dispose, so perfectly his own Man, as when he is directed by Truth, and determined by Goodness.

The holy Scripture warrants us in the use of such Expressions, when it speaks of Men's being not only sick, and without Strength, but even *dead in Sins and Trespasses*, Eph. 2. and tells us, that those who live in Sensuality, who live no higher Life than that, *are dead whilst they live*. When it speaks of whole-
some, or healing Words, of that good

Doctrine in which Men were nourished up to eternal Life, of growing strong in Spirit,-- of being Servants to Sin, of being made free by the Truth of the Gospel, &c.

There is no Man who has been at all observant of his Soul, and of the several States of it, but he well apprehends this;-- he knows how much he was without true Life, when he lived in Sin; --- that he did not so much act of himself, as he was acted; that he had no Power to that which was good; that his Faculties were unable to do their proper Work; that his Mind, his Spirit was enslaved to, and served divers Lusts and Pleasures.

Now this Repentance recovers a Man again to his true and best Life, to Health and Vigour of Soul; it rescues him into Freedom; it reduces the truly natural State in and for which the Soul of Man was first made and intended. And this is a Man's coming to his right Mind, to himself, as is said of the Prodigal.

That this is a true Representation of Repentance, is evident to the Sense of them who have experimented the Thing. And no Discourse will make it plain to them who have not: For Life and Health are more to be felt, than talked of; but yet whoever will grant that he who changes and amends, is thus restored to life, &c. he grants no more than both Scripture, and the Penitents Experience, and Propriety of Speech will warrant; and withall owns the greatest Benefits to be consequent on, or rather joyn-
ed

ed with, and inseparable from Repentance.

Supposing this then, I thus plead; Is the Animal Life, the good plight of the Body, to be from under the restraint of Men so valuable, that we make great account of those Directions, whereby we are taught to recover a lost Health; that we esteem him an excellent Physician and Benefactor who prescribes us that which preserves or prolongs, much more recovers a Dying Life? And what respect do we pay to him who sets us free from a Prison? Are we thus affected to whatever is serviceable to this lower Life; or helps us to gain the shadow of Liberty? How then should we value that which does not only procure, but it self is the higher and better Life, the truer and more perfect Freedom!

4. The Man who hates and flies from Sin, and loves and follows after Righteousness, enjoys great Peace of Mind, and is full of most ravishing Pleasures. 4. Peace and Joy.

One of the strongest Objections against Repentance is, that the beginnings of it are accompanied with troubles of Soul. To this I answer in three particulars.

I. The very Sorrows of Repentance are not without all mixture of Pleasure; and the bitterness of Remorse for Sin, has some alloy from the naturalness of these Passions; for there is no Passion we have, nor Action we do, but if it be natural, it is attended with some Delight.

II. The

II. The other troubles which arise from Men's being unaccustomed to the works of Repentance, will in time and by use be gone; that which was hard at first, by practice will become easy.

III. However, those Delights go along with Repentance, which far exceed all the Troubles of it: nay, and hugely surpass all the Pleasures of Sin; which is the Argument I am now upon, and shall easily make out, thus:

i. The inward sense I have, that I am recovering into a good state, that my Life, Health, Strength, and freedom of Soul are returning to me; this affords a very great Pleasure. It is commonly said, that the sense we have of bodily health, is the greatest of Pleasures. If the Soul be so much pleased when the Body, its Servant, its Instrument, is in good case; how much more must her pleasure be, when she perceives her own good plight, and that all her Faculties move with vigor and regularity? and that she feels her self out-growing weakneſſes and distempers, and in a tendency to a most excellent state? This will be a Spring of ineffable and constant delight that is always at hand.

As oft as the Reformed Soul has occasion to Act, so many causes has it of new Pleasures; when it labours under difficulties, struggles with Opposition, encounters dan-

Dangers that are in the ways of well-doing; and when it overcomes these, it hath so many Triumphs of Joy.

2. But besides this, which arises from an inward feeling of her own good Estate, there are others that come from abroad; as from a consideration that all past Sins are pardon'd; the very thought of this must needs fill the Heart with unspeakable Joy.

The Man that ere-while apprehended himself falling down into the place of Destruction, now he sees that he has escaped that Misery, how will he be transported? He thinks of the many hainous offences of his Life, and of the woful Misery to which they had made him obnoxious; and of the certainty of his Doom, if he had died in his Sins: And when he looks on himself as delivered from all this; how must this fill him with new Life, and make his heart leap within him? the Soul that has the sense of Guilt, and fear of Condemnation removed, that is no longer under the Terrors of the Almighty, nor afraid of Judgment, must have great Peace. Especially

3. If the Soul be perswaded also of God's Love and Good-will, and that he has a kindness and favour for it. This will fill a Man with joyful Expectations, and give him a pleasant Prospect. He will take a view of the whole World, and say, All this is his who is my Friend; and he will bestow as much of it on me, as can be good for me to have.

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This one Thought, God loves me, is enough to banish all Fear and Trouble from the Breast; and to make all Anguish and Torment to vanish, as the Mist does before the Sun. These are some of the Pleasures of Repentance, which do not only make ample Amends for all that Sorrow which it may occasion, but does infinitely surpass the most delicious Enjoyments that Sin can give.

5. Security and freedom from Fear.

5. He that is in this good State, is prepared for the worst things that can befall him, he is out of danger from, and may be out of fear of them: The Venom is taken out of all Calamities, when the Guilt and Power of Sin is removed; so that if Poverty, or Reproach, Persecutions, Sickness, Death it self fall on him, he is not dismay'd, but will comfort himself in this, that his Sins are pardon'd, that he is at peace with God, and in his Favour: these things will support him in the midst of multitudes of Evils, they will delight his Soul.

He can now without much difficulty possess his Soul in Patience, when he knows that these are not the beginnings, but the ends of his Sorrows, that these and all his Sufferings shall have an end; when he looks on them, not as fore-runners of Woes, but preparatives for Bliss and Glory, he will not only be quiet, but also pleased under them.

Now, how great a Priviledg is this, and how desirable to us! For Man is born to trou-

trouble, 'tis his earthly Inheritance ; and none of us knows how large a portion of Afflictions we may yet have before we die : We know not what we shall undergo, perhaps as much Hardship, and as cruel Torments as the malice of Earth and Hell can invent. Those of us, who have the least and fewest, shall have enough, enough for us to grapple with, and to bear up under : We shall have no need of the addition of that load, of a guilty Conscience ; no, surely it behoves us to get our selves clear'd of Sin and Guilt ; which, if we have done by hearty Reformation, how supportable, how easy, how pleasant will all be ?

6. And when all Evils have done their worst, when Death seems to have conquered the good Man, and to hold him close Prisoner in the Grave ; yet even then he is very happy. The Soul which had so well acquitted it self here, in breaking off a sinful Course, in a brave performance of those holy and vertuous Purposes, which it had well and wisely made, is now exalted to Bliss : Nay, and that Body which was the Soul's partner in Vertue and Goodness, shall also be rais'd out of this state of Corruption, in which now it is, to great Perfection, and so shall be made meet to partake with it.

6. Immortal
Bliss.

Thus the Penitent, when he puts away his Sin, at the same time he puts away the Evils that follow it ; he disarms them all of their power to hurt him ; he unstrings Death it self, and may sing the Apostles most

most Triumphant Expressions: *O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory?*

Others fare
the better for
the true Peni-
tent.

II. But this is not all that comes of this Repentance; that by it the Penitent is himself brought into an excellent state; but others also fare the better, his Family, Neighbours, Friends, Acquaintance; nay, his Enemies, his Superiors and Inferiors, all that have to do with him, that stand in any relation to him; all have cause to rejoice at his Amendment: The Society, the Church or Kingdom of which he is a Member, are the better for this Change. For,

i. Such as were either mischievous, or altogether uselefs; or, at best but of little use to others, are by this become serviceable and profitable to their Brethren: They are honest and just, true and faithful, charitable and kind in their dealings; he that was before a cruel Oppressor, is now not only just, but fair and kind in his usage; he that was proud and insolent in his Carriage, is now become civil and modest in his Deportment.

This is plain, by a natural and necessary consequence, how much others must fare the better for any Man's Repentance. But what then shall we say of those Penitents who are made worse Men, Neighbours, Friends, more uselefs, or it may be mischievous than they were before? I wish there were not too much cause for such a reflection as this: but I pass it.

2. Ve-

2. Very often God himself blesses the Families, Relations, Towns, Countreys of such as truly repent, in an extraordinary manner; the Persons with whom they live, are the better for their sakes; Judgments are frequently diverted, and the Blessings of Heaven show'd down because of them.

Remember the Discourse of the Angel with *Abraham* concerning *Sodom*; and that of our Saviour, that the Miseries of the *Jews* would be so great, that, as it should seem, none should scape, *No flesh be saved*; but for the Elect, the Christians, who did repent and believe the Gospel, those days should be shortned.

Shall not this Consideration prevail with us of this Church and Kingdom? Do we not fear the greatest Evils, and shall we not take the way to divert them? How shall we prevent the Desolations of Intestine or Foreign Wars? How shall we prevent the mischievous effects of a Treacherous Peace, a Peace worse than a War? How shall we secure our Religion and our Government, and keep our selves from being taken off the old Foundations? Why, Let every one of us forsake the evil of his ways. And as this is all we can, so all we need to do; For we shall then have reason to hope, that though the Decree for our destruction was gone out, yet it shall be recalled: And if we return to God by an hearty Amendment, he will also return to us; so that if we have any regard to our dear Country, we shall Repent.

III. Lastly,

It is grateful
and pleasant to
Heaven it self.

III. Lastly, if we would do a thing that is grateful and pleasant to Heaven it self, we must mend our Lives; For *there is Joy in Heaven*, saith the Scripture, *amongst the Angels* at the Repentance of a Sinner: They, it seems, sympathize with us; in our Affliction they are afflicted, and in our Prosperity they rejoice. And I am sure, nothing can be more Honourable to God, than is the Conversion of a Sinner. This is a plain acknowledgment of God's Right and Sovereignty, &c.

If then we would procure our selves the greatest Good, if we would benefit others; if we would do that which is pleasing to Angels, and honourable to God himself; if we have any regard to, any fear of God, any Charity to Men, any tenderness to our Country, any love to our selves, we must Repent.

Thus I have made appear, that Repentance is not only the most fit and seemly, but the most profitable and advantagious practice we can undertake: Surely we must think so of it, when it entitles us to the pardon of our Sins, and to the love of God; when it is it self a good state of Soul, keeps our Minds in Peace, and through the Mercy of God, secures to us everlasting Life; that is, it brings with it all the most desirable Blessings of Heaven and Earth, of this Life, and of the other.

And this may seem sufficient: For who are they, or how should I go about to perswade them who are not prevail'd with
by

by such Arguments as these, whom neither Honesty, nor yet Profit will move? But yet some may think that there are other Ways wherein they may obtain these Benefits; or if they be without them, they shall be well enough for all that. Wherefore,

3. I will farther shew, that this Amendment of our Selves, of our Natures, and of our Ways, is absolute, and indispensably necessary to our being made Partakers of these Blessings, without which we cannot be happy; nay, without which we shall be inevitably miserable. Two Things are here to be cleared.

Argument 3.
From the absolute and indispensable Necessity of it.

I. That unless we be Partakers of the Benefits which come by Repentance, we cannot be happy,--- we shall be undoubtedly miserable.

II. Without such Repentance we shall not, we cannot partake of them.

1. Let us take a short View of them, and the Truth of this will presently appear. For
1. Suppose a Man continuing under Guilt, liable to the Divine Vengeance, which will be inflicted on all condemned Sinners. Suppose a Man in this State, that when he shall be judged, he shall be condemned. Is this Man happy, who must, through Fear of Judgment to come, and of everlasting Wo, continue all his Life-time in most miserable Bondage?

No Happiness without the Benefits which come by Repentance.

Or, 2. How can we call any Man happy, who is not in the Love and Favour of God,

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without

without whose Love none can possibly be happy? But what may we then say of him whom God hates, and with a perfect Hatred? Surely we must account him miserable.

And, 3. Is not he necessarily so, whose Soul is in so unnatural a State, as to love and practise Sin; that is, who acts unaccountably to himself, whose Choices are foolish, whose Will is not determined according to Reason, nor his Passions govern'd by Understanding? This is the most diseased, sickly, contra-natural State that the Soul can be in.

Surely, whosoever is unreasonable in his Choices, and ungovern'd in his Passions, who is not loved of God, and is liable to Damnation, this Man is unhappy. What though he abound in Wealth, and his Condition is as prosperous as the World can make it; yet if within a few days he shall be called to account, and shall as certainly be condemned as he now lives; how wretched is he, notwithstanding all that he enjoys? And what Account is to be made of that worldly Happiness which shall so shortly leave him, when he shall fall from all his Greatness, and the height of his Excellency, into endless Wo?

Consider, I beseech you, Whether all Things, without God, can make any Man happy? Whether the Good-will of him who governs all, be not more necessary than all the rest, since that is sufficient without them, but they without that, are impotent.

Con-

Consider, that tho the whole World be for us, if the great God be against us, it can afford us no Shelter, no Security against him.——

And then, so long as our Souls are distempered with Vice, so long as Folly and Madness reign in our Hearts, that we love, and live in Sin, we cannot be made happy by all that can be done for us; not all the World; not the Almighty Power of God himself can make such an one happy, no more than a sick Man can, whilst he is sick, be said to be well, and at ease.

Wisdom and Vertue are essential and principal Parts of the Soul's Happiness, they are indeed its Happiness; -- so that a Man may as well be said to be well without Health, as to be happy without Vertue: For let us imagine him to be in the outward Condition in which the Blessed are; let him be in all the Externals and Circumstances of their Glory, in Company with the holy Angels, with the blessed Jesus; let him be there where the ever-blessed God makes the most conspicuous and visible Manifestations of Himself; yet if his Desires be inordinate, if his Appetites be sensual, if his Will and Affections be not under the Government of his Understanding, if he have false Opinions and wrong Judgments of things, &c. all the other will be so far from making him happy, that indeed he will be but the more miserable--- the great Unsutableness betwixt his Faculties, and their Objects; the Opportunity he has of acting, and his Indisposition

sition to act, will be his Torment. He desires what he has not, and cares not for what he has: he is sensible of what he might, and should do, yet does it not, nor has any list to it. Now this must needs signify nothing, but to fill him with disquiet and regret.

This may better be conceived by these Instances. What is it to a blind Man, or to him who has very tender sore Eyes, tho the Sun shine never so gloriously? It is nothing to the one, and it is very painful and tormenting to the other. Again; a full Table is pleasant to one that has a good Appetite, but is loathsome to him that has a full Stomach. Walking is delightful to one that is strong and sound, but is a Pain to him that is lame or weak. Agreeable Company, suitable Employments, are grateful; but how irksome is it, when we converse with those whom we do not like? And how tiresome are those Exercises to which we have no Inclination?

All this may convince us, that it is the Temper and Disposition of our Minds that must make Heaven: And that no external Thing, without Faculties, and a frame of Spirit corresponding to them, can make us happy. And that so long as we are ignorant and mistaken, inconsiderate and foolish, unresolved and inconstant, unreasonable and inordinate in our Desires, and exorbitant in our Passions; whatever our outward Condition and Circumstances be, we must be unhappy; though the whole World should con-

conspire to make us happy, it could not do it; nay, Omnipotence it self could not do it.

By this it appears sufficiently, That he whose Sins are not pardoned, who is not in the Favour of God, whose Soul is not in a good State, cannot be happy, he must necessarily be miserable, let his outward Condition be what it will: That's the first Particular.

II. I proceed to shew, that unless we repent, God is displeased with us; our Sins are not, nor will be pardoned; and we are in that ill State of Mind, which renders us incapable of Happiness.

Without Repentance no partaking of the Benefits of it.

As to the first Branch, That our Sins will not be forgiven without Repentance. We may be assured of this, if we consider, That,

1. God, who administers Matters righteously, sees that every Man receive according to his Works. This the Scripture abundantly assures us. But if no Difference be made betwixt the obstinate Sinner that goes on in his Wickedness, and him who bethinks himself, and returns to his Duty; then do they not receive according to their Works; and no Distinction is made betwixt the resolved and the repenting Sinner, if the one be pardoned as well as the other.

If it comes to the same, whether the Sinner go on to work Wickedness, or break off his sinful Practice, this would be manifest Injustice; And as all Injustice is, so this would

be most gross Folly, such as is seldom seen amongst us Men.

If we ascribe Wisdom to God's Government, as we must ; then we suppose it so constituted, as in fit Ways, and by apt Means to procure the Publick Good : if either the good of Society be not intended, or if improper unlikely Means be used for the attaining it, that is an unwise Administration.

What the good State both of Men singly, and the Bodies of Men is, I need not say ; the Ways which God takes to bring us to it, is by the Laws which he has given us, whereby he not only directs, but requires us what to do, and what not to do. — He has likewise back'd these Laws by Promises to the Obedient, and Threats to the Transgressors. — Amongst the rest, foreseeing that all Men would fail in the Performance of their Duty, he has commanded all to repent, and assur'd them of the Forgiveness of those Sins which they shall turn from. These Laws are also back'd with such forcible Motives, as are apt to work upon our Hopes and Fears.

And we cannot but think, that however the Folly of Man may make good Laws, and never after see to their Execution, yet the Wisdom of God will take care, that both his Promises and Threats shall be made good. For if we could imagine him to let Things go at random, so as that the stubborn, unrelenting Offender should be pardoned as well as the reformed Penitent, then his
Laws

Laws would lose their Honour, no Man would regard them, and his Government must come to nothing.

It would then be the same Thing, whether his Subjects kept or brake his Laws, for they should all fare alike — And if so, to what purpose were these Laws made? What do they signifie as to the End of Government, the Publick Good? they are altogether ineffectual and vain.

Such Folly is scarce found among us Mortals, as to forgive Offenders and Rebels, who will not submit themselves, lay down their Arms, and confess, *i. e.* declare, that they will forsake their evil Practices. Will a Master forgive his Servant, a Prince his Subject, a Parent his Child, on other Terms than these? How would this take off their Restraint, and let them loose to all Manner of Extravagancies? How would it dissolve Government it self? And can we impute this Folly to the All-wise God in his Administrations, which is not incident to others?

Let none entertain such unworthy Thoughts of God, as if he either did not design the good of his Subjects, or did not make choice of fit Means for the procuring it, as if his Laws were not good, &c. And let none think, that God will be more regardless of his Laws, than foolish Men ordinarily are of theirs.

2. Let us consult our own Observation, and look into ancient Histories, and these will furnish us with great Reason to con-

clude, that without Repentance, no Pardon.

Reflect upon the old World,-- the Cities of Sodom,-- the Canaanites,-- the Israelites, who were often plagued, and carried into Captivity, and at last destroyed, and all because they repented not. It is visible to any one that reads the ancient Records of God's dealings with this People, that their going on in their Sins brought all their Calamities upon them; and whenever they reformed, Deliverance followed. Nor was it so with them only, but with others. Was not this the Case of Nineveh, of Nebuchadnezzar? &c. And thus certainly it is in God's Dispensations with all Men whatever. As to this,

1. Consider, that all who commit, much more who continue in Wickedness, are punish'd in one Kind or other; even they themselves that repent, before they repent, suffer some Evil or other, which is the Occasion of their Repentance. But this is much more observable in those that continue unreformed, whether they be single Persons, or Societies: how many Kingdoms have been utterly destroyed? And it has been conspicuous to all, that Iniquity has been their Ruine.

Sometimes the Miseries they have undergone, have been the genuine Issue, the natural Consequent of their Sin.-- But always they have been the Judgment of God for their Sin.

I might recite many instances out of History, of whole Nations that have been destroyed by and for their Wickedness; but I rather leave it to every Man's Observation, whether all have not suffer'd in some proportion to their Sins? Whether any who have not grown wiser, and left off their Wickedness, have not brought on themselves Divine Vengeance?

And as for single Persons, though every one has not undergone those more conspicuous and notorious Calamities that some do; yet they have not escaped the more secret lashes of Divine Justice; they have many a secret lash from their own Consciences, tho they escape those other Executions that are in view.

2. Their Punishments have been sure, tho slow. God in great Mercy has deferr'd to Punish them, that he might give them space to Repent: But if they have abused his Patience; if instead of Repenting, they have multiplied their Transgressions, till they have fill'd up their measure, when did they escape?

Besides, the pain which Men feel, and the Evils which are inflicted on them, there are others very considerable, viz. Losses which they sustain, of great Good which they are deprived of. It is not only to be minded what Calamities they endure, but what Damages they undergo; not what they do suffer, but what they might have enjoy'd if they had not gone on in Sin. And that is very much.

How

How quiet, how joyful might they have been, how might they have rejoiced with Joy unspeakable, &c? How wise, how virtuous might they have been? what an excellent Temper might they have attain'd?

If we take in these two Considerations, we must say, that never any People, never any Person that went on in their Sins, were unpunish'd on Earth.

And if it be thus in this World, where God did not intend to make a full retribution; where, if we respect this state only, things go unequally: we may well conclude, that none shall escape the Judgment of God, who persevere in Sin. If they who do Repent, yet cannot avoid many and no small Evils, what shall we think of them who persist in their evil ways? If the Wrath of God against Sin in this Life, be so conspicuous, how much more shall it be at the day of the revelation of the righteous Judgment of God, which our very Natures and Minds presage, and which the Scriptures do foretell?

3. Let us see on what terms God has promis'd Pardon; and what methods he has prescribed us for the obtaining it. And if we consult either the intimations of his Counsel, which he has given us by our own Natures, or the Sense of Mankind: Or the Revelations of his Will made to Holy Men; to *Moses* and the *Prophets*, to our *Saviour* and his *Apostles*; we find they all agree in

in this, that without our amendment no Pardon is to be hoped for.

That secret remorse which we have upon the commission of Sin, is certainly intended by the wise Author of our Natures, to check us from a repetition of it; the plain voice of it is, that we should do so no more. And this is a sufficient Declaration of the Will of him that made us.

Let us go to the more express Declarations of God's purpose in the Bible, *Gen. 4. 7. If thou doest not well, Sin lies at the Door, i.e. Punishment awaits thee, so as that thou canst not go out, nor come into thy House, but it will be upon thee.* Not to multiply proofs in so plain a Case, consult *Isa. 1.* from the 10th to the 20th verse; He declares, that no other thing without amendment, would avail, would divert the Punishment threatened; *Ezek. 18.* from the 20 to the end, *Why will ye die?* No way to escape Death but by Repentance. Thus *John the Baptist, Mat. 7. 7, 8.* cries, *Who has forewarned you to flee from the wrath to come?* implying, that this was the only way; and that they were not safe neither, unless they brought forth fruits meet for Repentance; that is, unless they continued to do the works of Repentance, unless they carried them on towards Perfection; *For the Axe is laid to the root of the Tree.*

It is the Doctrine both of our Saviour, and his Apostles, that unless Men repent, they shall perish; that there is no way to escape, no way to be saved, but this.—
Our

Our Saviour came to call Sinners to Repentance, *Mat. 9.13.* It was his Design in coming amongst us. His Baptism is called *the Baptism of Repentance*, *Luke 3. 3.* After his Resurrection, when he opened the Minds of some of his Disciples to understand the Scriptures, he told them, that *thus it behoved him to suffer, &c.* And that *Repentance and remission of Sins should be preached to the Nations in his Name.* This was the sum of the Doctrine of the Gospel, as he understood it, *Luke 24. 44.* And so the Apostles preached *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*, *Acts 20. 21.* and *Acts 5. 31.* Our Saviour is said to be made a *Prince or Ruler, and a Saviour to give Repentance to Israel, and remission of Sins*: These two are joined together, and they ought to be inseparable.

Heb. 6. 1. The Apostle calls it the *Foundation of Repentance from dead works*, and *ver. 6.* He sets out the desperate condition of Men that had Apostatized from Christianity; with whom the Gospel-Dispensation was ineffectual, that it was *impossible to renew them to Repentance*; implying, that therefore there was no hopes of them.

And where-ever the Apostles do direct any the way to obtain Pardon, it is by Repentance: *Acts 2. 38.* *Repent, and be Baptized for remission of Sins*, is said to them who crucified our Lord; and again, *Acts 3. 19.* *Repent, and be Converted, that your Sins may be blotted out, that (ὅπως ἔσται) the times of refreshing may come, i. e. That you may be delivered*

livered from the Calamities that hang over you. And *Acts* 8. 22. When *Simon Magus* offered such a Contumely, as to buy the power of working Miracles with Money; the Counsel that *Peter* gives, was to Repent of or from his Wickedness, and pray to God, if so be that might be forgiven him. To name but one place more, *Rev.* 2. 5. *St. John* advises the Church of *Ephesus* to this, as the only way to prevent their loss of the Christian Religion.

This may abundantly convince us, that these are the terms on which God offers and gives Pardon under the Gospel, as well as in all other times: And therefore, that we can have no reason to expect that our Sins should be forgiven, unless we Repent.

If any should imagine God to be so good, as that he will forgive notwithstanding: They ought to consider, that as it cannot consist with his Wisdom and other Perfections to do this, so neither with Goodness it self: It would not be for the good of the World, that Men who go on in their Sin, should escape without Punishment, — nay, it cannot be; for Sin and Suffering are inseparable, the Divine Power cannot sever these two, they cleave so close to each other.

2. That God is so far from loving any one that does not repent, that he cannot but hate him, will appear, if we consider the unspotted Purity and Holiness of the Divine Nature it self: He is Light, and in him

him is no Darkneſs at all; all his Ways are Holy. And he that loves his own good nature and perfections, how can he love that which is contrary to them?

As the infinite Goodneſs of God will incline him to compaſſionate every one that but begins to return to his Duty, ſo as he will not quench the ſmoaking Flax; ſo he will oppoſe thoſe that ſet themſelves againſt him. Every where the Scripture repreſents him as abhorring the obdurate obſtinate Sinner.

3. He that chuſes to go on in his Wick- edneſs, is in ſuch an ill ſtate of Mind, as has been ſhewn, as renders him incapable of Happineſs.

If Ignorance and Folly, if Unreaſonable- neſs, if Madneſs, if Inconſideration, if Un- naturalneſs, if Diſorderlineſs and Tumult make an ill ſtate of Soul, the obſtinate Sin- ner is in that ſtate. If ignorance of God, and of true Goodneſs, of a Man's ſelf and his own beſt Interests, of Happineſs and Miſery, and of the ways that lead to both, do conſtitute an ill temper of Mind, then is the Sinner's ſuch: And how altoge- ther impoſſible it is for one of this ſtate and temper to be happy; how neceſſary it is for him to be very unhappy, to be in a great degree of Miſery, I leave all to judg.

Is not he unreaſonable and fooliſh who prefers his Body before his Soul? that which is Temporal, before that which is Eternal? Who loves the Creature more than

than God? And had rather enjoy the pleasures of Sin for a season, than have that exceeding and Eternal weight of Glory?

After all this, I may well conclude, that amendment of Heart and Life, is absolutely necessary to our being Saved. And if we will not yield to it, because it is fit and becoming, nor because it is profitable and beneficial; yet surely we shall be prevailed with, because it is necessary; there is no other way for us to be Happy, to escape Misery, but this.

Having thus shewn the Grounds and Reasons in general, why we should amend our Lives: I now proceed according to the Method I propounded, to consider what force there is in the Reason exprest by our Saviour in the Text, to perswade those that heard, and us that read it, to this Reformation: *For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.*

The Motive to Repent, expressed by our Saviour in the Text.

It is an Argument from that Dispensation of Divine Providence which was now so near them; for that (as has been shewn) is meant by the Kingdom of Heaven, or of God, which had now approached, and would so very shortly be amongst them. The sense which is wrapt up in that expression, I explain thus:

Our Saviour seems to have an Eye in this expression, to the Administration of things before his coming, both amongst the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and to acquaint them with
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another, which God by him would set up, to which all the rest should vail.

It is as if he had said, That whereas before God had govern'd Mankind, only by their own natural Instincts and Inclinations, Traditions and Reasonings; all which were now become not only useless but hurtful to them, partly through their own inconsideration, neglect and opposition to the light of their Understandings, and most unnatural abuse of themselves; as also the unkind Dealings, or evil Counsels and Examples of other Men; together with the malicious suggestions and powerful Temptations of the Devil, who had so far prevail'd over Men, that they were wholly in a manner subject to him, and he seem'd to have got the Sovereignty over them, and to be the God of this World, whole Nations worshipping him, and almost all People of the Earth, in one kind or other, doing him Homage, those few only excepted, who obeyed the Laws of God, which were declared to them by the low voice of Nature, nor were they wholly exempted from his Tyranny.

And tho in this universal Depravation, God was pleas'd to make choice of the Family of his Faithful Servant *Abraham*, to govern them, to preside over them, and protect them in a more especial manner, and instructed them by his Servant *Moses* in his Will, giving them Laws and Statutes; in the observance of which he would defend them, and for it give them an ample re-

Recompence of the good Things of this World.

Now though the Ordinances and Judgments which God gave this People, were very good, and entitled them to the Blessings of this Life, --- yet through the Corruption and Wickedness of the *Jews*, instead of Helps to Piety, and Vertue, and their true Happiness, they became an Occasion of their farther Degeneracy, of a greater Apostacy from God and Goodness; and so were instrumental to their Misery, --- inso-much that they were both more vicious, and consequently more miserable than many others of the Nations. Nay, the Devil himself had invaded this, which was God's own Inheritance; and did frequently possess himself of the Bodies of this People, which he most evilly intreated.

The Case being thus, That God's Government, though it can never be quite abolished, yet was almost wholly obscured, and did not attain its primary End, the Welfare and good State of the World. Therefore the Divine Goodness and Wisdom resolved to re-establish it here on Earth; and to set up a spiritual Kingdom in the Souls of Men, which should break in pieces all other Kingdoms that should oppose it, and bring all other Power into Subjection and Subordination to it self: Satan, and all his Powers of Darkness, of Ignorance and Wickedness, should now be cast down from their usurped Dominion in the Souls of Men. And the Throne of God, who is the rightful
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Sovereign of Mankind, should be re-erected and established again; which the Wisdom of God design'd to bring about after this manner.

God's only begotten Son, *the express Image of the Father*, in whom all the Glory of the Deity shone forth, came amongst us, and both by his plain and good Doctrine, and by his holy and blameless Life and Death, by his great and wonderful Works which he wrought, and by his glorious Resurrection from the Dead, he both shewed us how we should live, and most effectually moved and engaged us by irresistible Arguments to obey his Commands, and follow his Example; and also by the secret, but most powerful Assistance of his Holy Spirit, inclined and helped us thus to live, by both exciting and seconding our Endeavours.

Thus God manifested himself, his Power and Wisdom; and by the Acknowledgments which the blessed *Jesus* made to him in his Life and Death, he declared and asserted his Right to govern us, and by this new Promulgation of his Laws (which were almost blotted out of the Minds of Men) and ratifying them by the Sanctions of most excellent Promises, and terrible Threats, he intended to engage them to whom they were first made known, to obey them. And that others, beholding the excellent Fruits of such an Obedience, might be prevailed with to imitate these great Examples, and become obedient to the Laws of Heaven,
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and Subjects of God's Kingdom, as they were.

This is the Kingdom of Heaven, and this is the manner of it, which our Saviour said then was come so near to them; and which, after he began to preach, he said was amongst them.

This is that which *Daniel* foretold should break in pieces, and consume all other Kingdoms that opposed it, and should stand for ever.

How much this at first did subdue the World, and bring under all that exalted it self against it, we all know. And how, and by what Means the Progress of this Victory was retarded and stopt, may appear upon Enquiry. — And it is a Matter worthy our Enquiry, but is not my present Business. For I am only to give an Account of this Kingdom in general, which our Saviour here calls *the Kingdom of Heaven*, intimating to us, That those blessed Ones, who are in Heaven, live under the same Laws and Government which we here do. — The same Laws for substance, they are with those of Sobriety, or the good use, the best Exercise of our selves; and those of Righteousness and Truth, of Goodness and Kindness towards others; — of Faith and Hope in, of Love to, and Fear of God, which are given us under the Gospel. And which, if we from our Hearts obey, we shall be qualified and prepared for the State of Heaven, where the Will of God is done fully, and constantly: And we shall be rewarded with that Blessedness,

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fedness, which is by our Saviour promised to all his Disciples ; *i. e.* to all those that do the Will of God.

I have stayed the longer in the Explication of this Phrase so often used in the Scripture, that I might remove the Misapprehensions which some have of this Matter, who imagine (as the *Jews* of old did) I know not what temporal secular Empire to be introduced by our Saviour : whereas all that he designed, was to bring in everlasting Righteousness amongst Men, and by making Men so wise, as to be good and virtuous, holy, and truly religious, to erect a Throne for God, their true Sovereign, in their Souls, and to make Kings and Emperors, and all the greatest Powers on Earth, to obey his Laws, and serve him ; that is, to be good Men.——Not that any under the Pretence of Christianity should invade and usurp the Rights of Princes, but that they who rule over others, should themselves be Subjects of this Kingdom.

Now to bring this to the Matter in hand. This appears to be our Saviour's meaning, That since God is now upon the Design of rescuing Mankind from the Slavery of Sin, and the Usurpations of the Devil, and is setting up his own Kingdom amongst Men ; since he is about to make known his Laws, and by all ways to engage and help you to obey them ; and by your Obedience to make you everlastingly happy. And since he will destroy all those that will not have him to rule over them--- Therefore do you amend

amend your Lives, that you may be prepared and fitted for this Dispensation, and be made Partakers of the great Benefits which they, who comport with that Administration, shall receive; and prevent, and escape those Calamities, and that Misery which shall befall them, who resist this Counsel of Heaven against themselves, and oppose God's Government.

The Sum of what I apprehend to be the force of our Saviour's Reason, Why they should repent and amend, is, That by this they would be so fitted and disposed for the Reception of the new Dispensation by Christ, that they would correspond and comply with it, and thereby entitle themselves to all the Blessings which the Subjects of God's Kingdom enjoy; that is, live under the Protection of his Almighty Power, and be Partakers of those many other Privileges, which they that obey God's Laws, have here on Earth; and after this Life is ended, be admitted into the Glories and Blessedness of Heaven. Whereas on the other hand, if they were not set upon amending their Ways, and the bettering of themselves, then this great Dispensation of God, by which he intended so much good to the World, would not attain its End on them; but through their Neglect of, or Opposition to it, this great Grace of God would become vain and ineffectual to them; not only so, but a sore Judgment upon them, and their utter Destruction.

This is the Argument our Saviour here uses to perswade to Repentance,--- which does depend on, and suppose the Truth of these Particulars.

I. That God's Dispensations towards us, which are in order to our Happiness, do not attain that their End, unless they be complied with by us; unless in our Spirits we correspond, and in our Practice we comport with them. If we resist and oppose them, if we run counter to them, if we walk contrary to God, he will walk contrary to us; and his Administration, which was intended, and had we complied with it, would have proved for our good, will, if we be opposite to it, be opposite to us, and work our Ruine.

II. That ordinarily we shall not thus comport with the Divine Administrations, unless our Minds be prepared by some suitable Dispositions. And therefore *John the Baptist* is said, when he preached, *to prepare a People made ready for the Lord.*--- And they were Persons of good Minds generally who received the Gospel.

III. That Repentance, or a breaking off a former evil Course of Life, and a setting themselves to live better, was that proper Disposition, that Preparation which would fit them for the Gospel-Administration, which, if it be considered, nay, at first view does appear to be an admirable Contrivance

of the Divine Wisdom to make Men good.

All that was said, and all that was done by our Saviour, all that beset him in his Life, and at his Death and after, do manifestly aim at, and tend to this one Thing, to make us holy and vertuous--- This is the End of all, to redeem us from all Iniquity, and to make us zealous of good Works---

Now then, whosoever was on this Design before, endeavouring to purifie himself from all Filthiness, and to make him a new Heart, how well is he qualified for the Reception of the Gospel? For he will find himself mightily assisted by it in the Prosecution of his End. This will help to make Sin appear more evil than he ever thought it before. The Sufferings of the Son of God on the Account of Sin, make it appear worse, more detestable and dangerous than he apprehended. And now Vertue commends him in the Name and Authority of the only begotten of the Father, who continued in the Practice of it to death. Now it invites and encourages him to follow it with more certain and glorious Rewards, than were ever proposed before. Now it assures him, that will continue in Well-doing, that he shall not fail of Eternal Life.

Thus being on his Return to God, and well resolved to live better, he must needs give an hearty Welcome to an Administration that is so very helpful to him, and will so much farther the Work which he designs.

And he will be ready to believe, That this Revelation comes from God, because it tends so much to the Obedience of God's Laws, and the setting up of God's Kingdom.

From what has been said, appears, in what a Readiness they are, and how forward they must needs be to receive the Gospel, who do repent-- And we shall be more confirmed in this, if we consider what Course *John Baptist* took to make ready a People prepared for the Lord, which was no other than this, *viz. To turn the Disobedient to the Wisdom of the Just.* He exhorted them to Repentance, and instructed them in their Duties, and this he looked on as making ready a People prepared for the Lord.

For a farther Evident of this, we may consider who, and what manner of Persons they were, that gave the readiest Entertainment to the Gospel, and we shall find, that the generality were sincere-hearted Persons, devout, charitably inclined, such as heard *John Baptist*, and were baptized of him; and such as were very zealous, tho ignorant-ly so. And on the other hand, they who resisted and rejected the Counsel of God, who received this Grace in vain, were Men of wicked Hearts and Lives, such as were proud and conceited, that they needed no Repentance, such as were covetous, and worldly, sensual and debauched, Hat-ers, or at least Disregarders of Vertue and Goodness.

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This may be sufficient to shew, that Repentance does most properly qualify us to receive the Gospel, as might be shewn in particular: The tidings of Christ's being made a Sacrifice for Sin, must be very welcome to him who is convinced of the Evil, the unworthiness and demerit of Sin, whereas it will seem a strange and needless thing to him who loves or slight it; He who thinks it Good and not Evil, will wonder why the Son of God should die to expiate it.

Again, He that sees his own evil and imperfection, that understands his own impotency and weakness, but will be glad of Direction and Assistance to live better; and so will he who hates Sin and loves Vertue: Whereas he whose Deeds are evil, will hate the Light, and whatever has a tendency to reform him.

And, to mention no more, he whose Soul is apprehensive of the Punishment to which he is obnoxious; and is uncertain of the pardon of his Sins, and of the Favour of God, must needs give a most hearty welcome to the promise of Forgiveness of Sins; and be very glad to be assured of the Love and Good-Will of God to him, notwithstanding the offences of his former Life.

4. And as Repentance does prepare Men for the reception of the Christian Doctrine before-hand; so after it is received, Repentance will be more helped forward, and carried on to greater Perfection.

For

For (as has been intimated before) we shall by the Gospel attain to greater Conviction of the evil of Sin, of the goodness of Holiness; we shall understand our Duty and the Obligations to it, better by far than we did; we shall now meet with those Laws, which are stamped with so much Wisdom and Goodness, so much Divinity, that we cannot question but that they were enacted by the Sovereign Authority of the most high God; and these backed with such Sanctions, that if either our Hopes will be excited by the greatest Good, or our Fears awakened by the most terrible Evils, we must be moved to Obedience.

Now if this be so as it is, then if we comport with the Gospel; if we act answerably to it, we shall be more careful and diligent, more constant and exact in the amending our ways, than otherwise we should have been. Whoever considers the Dispensation of Christ particularly; must say, that to purify our selves from all Iniquity, and to perfect Holiness, (which is Repentance compleat) is a Work suitable and congruous to it.

And if this would be their business when they were become his Disciples; he might well call on them before-hand to be doing that which they must do after: For it is manifest that if the Gospel has any effect on Men, it will make them Repent; and if it does not operate upon them, it does them no good. All that is done without
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us cannot make us Happy, unless there be also somewhat wrought in us.

Thus I have endeavoured to represent somewhat of our Saviour's reason ; much more might be added, which I shall not now particularly insist on. What I conceive to have been his meaning, I will thus sum up in short, *viz.*

The time is now very near, when the most powerful, wise, and good God, the Sovereign of the whole World, will vindicate his Dominion from the Usurpations of the Devil, and all those who act under him: He will by his Son exercise his Government more conspicuously, giving his Laws, protecting and rewarding the Obedient, and punishing the Rebellious.

Therefore do you no longer continue in Rebellion against him, be no more Servants of Sin, and Slaves to the Devil ; but return to your Allegiance, and your true Sovereign. Be not so unjust as to Rob God of his most undoubted right, your Obedience ; be not so wicked as to deny this ; be not so foolish, so desperately mad, as to oppose Almighty Power, as not to give up your selves to the conduct of unerring Wisdom, as not to put your selves under the Protection and Care of Infinite Goodness ; do not so forsake your Happiness, to run upon your own Destruction, as you and all do, who continue in Sin ; which will bring inevitable ruin, unless God be not resolved to punish it, as he has said he will.

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In a word, since God is about to take the Government into his own hands, submit unto it, that is, Repent, neither live as those that are at their own disposal, and do what they list; nor yet be Subjects to the Devil; but submit your selves to the rightful Governour of the World.

Thus our Saviour pleaded with those that heard him, when the time of God's Kingdom was at hand; and if his Argument was of force with them, it must be much more so with us, amongst whom the Kingdom of God is already come.

For we have certain knowledg of that which they only believed; our eyes see that to be, which was only told them would be: So that we have many advantages, whereby our Repentance may be assisted and farther'd, which they wanted, who had not received the Gospel.

1. For we now understand our Duty more clearly, and fully, and certainly than they to whom our Saviour Preached then did: And the good understanding what we ought to do, conduceth both to the knowledg of the Sins of our past Life, and also the doing our Duty for the future.

2. We have more exceeding great Promises of more glorious Rewards to encourage our Obedience; such things as Eye has not seen, &c. are promised to all those that do the Commands of God continually. And not only so, but there are Promises of special Assistance made to them that

that are willing to obey, and heartily resolve and endeavour so to do.

3. We have most terrible Denunciations and Menaces against them that obey not the Laws of God and of Christ, no less than Everlasting Destruction is threatned to them.

4. The Son of God himself and his Disciples have attested these things, and given Credit to them by their own good and exemplary Lives, by the mighty Works which they wrought, by their Constancy in suffering Death for Testimony to this Doctrine.

5. Lastly, We have several Illustrious instances both of Rewards and Punishments which have been distributed to the Obedient, and to the Transgressors of the Divine Laws: Our Saviour's Resurrection, and the preservation of the Christian *Jews* at the Sacking of *Jerusalem*, when the Unbelievers were most miserably Destroy'd, according to the Prediction of our Saviour, that unless they Repented, they should all Perish.

To conclude, by perswading you to amend your Lives, I perswade you to acknowledge God's Government; to be, and to shew your selves the Subjects of his Kingdom, to pay your Homage, to perform your Allegiance unto him that is your true Lord, and the rightful Sovereign of the whole Creation; who has published his Laws, which are all Holy, and Wise, and Good, and will most certainly take Care of, and De-

Defend all his liege Subjects ; nay, and amply reward those who obey his Will : But all those who will not have him to rule over them ; but will enslave themselves to the Devil to work wickedness ; or will be only at their own dispose, and own no Lord to have Dominion over them, all such he will utterly destroy.

And is not this good Counsel ? is not this Exhortation of our Saviour most reasonable ? is not his Argument perswasive and forcible, whereby he moves us to break off our Sins, and amend our Lives ?

If we do not yield unto it, our Sin becomes open and avowed Rebellion ; now that God has set up his Kingdom so visibly, we all that go on in our wickedness, declare our selves to be Rebels against the great King of all the World. We would be loth to be accounted Rebels against our Earthly Sovereign ; but if we persist in a sinful course, we are Rebels against our King's King.

Nor are we exceeding wicked only, but very unwise, (which two ever go together) For we go about to subvert the Order by which all things subsist, and which is absolutely necessary to the upholding of the World of Men : For so it is that God governs by his Laws, to which if we do not submit, we overthrow the Foundations of Human Society, and cut in pieces all those Bands which hold us together.

Again,

Again; in this we make the unwise choice that can be : for we take our selves out of his hands, who both can and will take care of us, and protect and provide for us ; and we put our selves under the power of one who seeks our ruine, and whose only design is to make us miserable -- We will not serve him who would reward our Subjection and Obedience with Everlasting Happiness; but we will be subject to him who is a Rebel against God, and Heaven's Out-Law, who by this has made himself most extreemly unhappy ; and endeavours to involve us all in the same Misery with himself.

The sum is ; if we forsake our evil ways, and do good, as we shall do right to God in submitting to his Government, so we shall be wise for our selves ; for we shall be sure of safe Protection here on Earth, and of most abundant Rewards hereafter in Heaven.

Hitherto I have considered Repentance in general, and have looked on those whom I have perswaded to it, only as single Persons, and under a private Capacity. I now proceed to a more particular and special consideration of it ; and shall use such Arguments as have respect to the Community, the Society of which we are Members, from a consideration of what is both of a present, and also of a publick Concernment.

Repentance
consider'd with
reference to the
Community.

Some

Some, whose Minds are not touched with any great sense of the future Life, yet have lively apprehensions of the Good and Evil of the present. And how many are there that seem to have no regard of their own Happiness, yet are wonderfully solicitous for their Children and Family; nay, and will Sacrifice their own Satisfaction to the Preservation and Service of their Country? which one word, as *Tully* observes, does contain all our Kindred, Friends and Acquaintance, and indeed almost all that is dear to us in the World.

Who knows therefore, but that they who have resisted the rest, may be overcome by this; and that some may be so generously good-natur'd, as to do that for the preventing a publick Calamity, which they would not undertake to shun a private and personal Danger; at least it may be hoped, that if this consideration be added to the other, it may prevail; and if the amendment of our ways be not only serviceable to our private interest, but also to the common Good, that we shall then fully resolve upon it.

This I question not but I shall make appear, by shewing in general, that Repentance or amendment of Life, is the only way to preserve a sinful State from Ruin: From whence I shall apply myself to the Inhabitants of this Nation.

I. Let it be considered, that this has been the only method prescribed by the
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Wisdom of God, whereby People should save themselves from Ruine. If there were any other Way to be preserved, we must suppose, that the Goodness of God would have directed Men to it, which we shall not find he ever did.

If we turn over the Bible, where we have the Counsel that Heaven has given to the Children of Men upon Record, wherever it has advised any wicked People how they might escape Ruine, it has advised them to repent.

Was it not thus with the old World? They had all corrupted their Ways before God, and Destruction was coming upon them, but God raised up *Noah*, a Preacher of Righteousness, amongst them; i. e. he called upon them to amend their Ways.

Was not *Lot* also a Preacher of Repentance to *Sodom*, when his righteous Soul was vexed with their unlawful Deeds? which they understood well enough; for no doubt he often called upon them, as he did when the Angels were with him, not to do so wickedly.

Thus it was also with *Nineveh*, whose Destruction was decreed within a Set-Time to come upon them, unless they repented.

Was not this the Method that the Prophets of God always used with the *Israelites*, when they had committed Wickedness,--did not they call them to Lamentation and Mourning, to Fasting and Prayer, to Sackcloth and Ashes? i. e. to the forsaking of
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their sinful Ways, to a Reformation; of which these were Signs and Expressions.

And was not this the Way whereby *John* the *Baptist*, and our blessed Saviour, taught the *Jews* to flee from the Wrath of God, to avoid that utter Extirpation which was coming upon them?

This then is plain, that God has directed all People to this Way, whereby they might be saved from Ruine,-- and to no other; whence we may conclude, that it is the only Way.

II. As many as have resisted the Counsel of God, have fallen under most dismal Calamities. Call to Mind, I beseech you, what befel the old World, who carelessly went on in their Wickedness, notwithstanding what *Noah* said and did: Did not the Flood overwhelm them? What became of *Sodom*, of hard-hearted incorrigible *Pharaoh* and his Host? of the *Canaanites*, and of all the Nations who were driven out before *Israel*? How often were the People of God's own Inheritance vanquished before their Enemies, and carried into Captivity? And at last, after vast Numbers of them slain, *Jerusalem* sacked, the Temple demolished, their whole Polity dissolved, and no Face of a Church or State left amongst them. And why all this? but because they would not forsake their evil Ways, and return unto the Lord.

Nor was this God's Method with the *Jews* only, but with the rest of the World.

If

If we go to profane Histories, tho they be very imperfect Records of Things, yet we shall be able to bring abundance of Instances from them to prove this, that unless sinful People have reformed, they have undergone most direful Calamities, and many times utter Desolation has come upon them. We might produce abundant of Testimonies for this, but they are needless.

Search into the Causes of the Dissolution of all the great Empires, and famous States that have been in the World, and you must say, that their Iniquity hath been their Ruine. See if you can find one where Prince and People have been generally vicious, that have escaped most dreadful Calamities; and if they have not reformed, have not been ruined?

Perhaps some may say, That there are in our Days Societies as wicked as any ever were, and yet continue in great Prosperity. To this I reply.

1. Though they may be very bad, yet they may have also many good Things in them; and out of this respect God may spare them. They that are Neglecters of God, and unjust, yet may be Inventors of useful Things to the World.--- They may be industrious, and temperate, and obedient to Governours, &c. Now to speak in Scripture-language; *Their Iniquities are not full.* And whatever good is found in them, God will reward that.

2. In a great Kingdom there may be many very good Persons-- for whose sakes God may spare the rest.

3. Stay a while before we pronounce them prosperous and happy ; *Yet a little while, and the Wicked shall not be : yea, thou shalt diligently consider his Place, and it shall not be. For they shall soon be cut down like the Grass, and wither as the green Herb,* saies the Psalmist, Psal/37. 2, 10. Let their Armies be never so great, their Exchequers inexhaustible, their Policy matchless, yet if they be wicked, *suis & ipsa Roma vitiis ruet* ; Notwithstanding all their Power and Craft, yet their Wickedness unrepented of, will be their Ruine.

Wherefore tho you see these Gourds start up in a Night, yet if Rottenness, if Wickedness be at the Root, they shall presently wither,--- perhaps our Eyes may see it : however, if the Vision be for an appointed Time, it cannot be very long,-- it will surely come, and not tarry. In the Morning they may flourish, but ere the Evening they shall be cut down.

It may be, the Sentence has not been executed so speedily against Sinners, as some short-spirited Men would have expected, yet for all that, it has come at last, and that before much time has passed.

Or, though the Execution has not fall'n within our Observation, yet we are to consider, that the Lord is not slack, as we Men judge, since one day is with him as a thousand years, &c. i. e. since he views all Times, and

and knows the fittest to punish, we may well suppose he will take that,--- and not that he will suffer Sin to go unpunished.

Or, if we could imagine, that wicked People might escape signal Judgments here, and that whole Nations of wicked Men might still be preserved without a Reformation, yet we are to look on this as one of those unusual Ways which God takes-- This is none of his established Methods, 'tis not a Way wherein we are to expect to meet him; it may be an Act of Sovereignty, no ordinary Dispensation: it may be sometimes God's Way with Men, not to destroy very sinful Nations; but it must never be our Way with God to look for Deliverance whilst we continue in our Sins. For to us he has said this, *If we will have Mercy, we must repent.* And then,

Though God may in some single Instances (which yet will not be so easie to find) not have destroyed a wicked and impenitent People, but his long-suffering has waited on them, yet the longer it has waited, if his Goodness has not led them to Repentance, the heavier has been their Doom at last.

Vengeance will overtake the Wicked: It may stay for a Time, it will not alway; and when it does come, it will make a thorough-work, an utter End.

Nor is this any such Wonder, because the Sins of a People are very often the natural and necessary Cause of a Peoples Calamity and Ruine.

Irreligion and Prophaneness overturn the very Foundations of Society ; and they that have broken these Bands wherewith God ties the Souls of Men to his Altars, can be held by none that Men can make.

They who fear not God, will not regard Men ; how unreasonable is it to expect they should keep their Allegiance to earthly Gods, who have cast off all Faith to the God of Heaven ?

And those who swear so commonly and so rashly, will not stick to swear falsely ; that is, those who stick not to swear without any Cause, surely will not boggle at an Oath, when by it they may secure or advance their worldly Estate.

Thus we might run through all Sins in particular, and see the ill Influence all Vice has on Society ; and that it must ruine the best constituted Government that is, or can be devised : such as Lying, Injustice, Ingratitude, Uncharitableness, Pride, Covetousness, Prodigality, Intemperance, Adultery, Whoredom, Idleness, &c.

These and all other Vices whatsoever do more or less tend to the Dissolution of any Society, where they are commonly and constantly practised by the Members of it. Nay, I add, That there can be no Sin so private and particular, but its Malignity is of a larger extent than to that single Person who committed it. It may be mortal to himself, but it is also hurtful to his Family, to his Neighbourhood, and through his Sides wounds the Church or Kingdom of which he is a Member. In-

Indeed no Man can suffer alone, but if he be damaged or hurt, so are all those whom he converses with, or is related unto: as no one Member of the Body can be grieved, but the whole Body is afflicted with it.

And if the Case be so, we may well conclude, that all Sin has very ill Effects on the Body Politick; that it is a natural and certain Cause of the Calamities which befall it, and that it tends to its Dissolution, --- to break in pieces all the Bonds of Society, --- that it makes Men both unable and unwilling to live in Society.

It is an old Observation, that even wicked Societies themselves cannot be upheld without some Vertues to cement them. Thieves and Robbers, and they who are false and unjust to all others, must be true and faithful to each other. If there be, as there will be, Divisions in the Devil's Kingdom, it cannot stand: And therefore, as our Saviour intimates, the Powers of that Kingdom of Darkness, take care that Order and Unity be preserved amongst their Subjects, as much as can be.

And now, I hope, I have sufficiently evinced, That Repentance or Amendment of Life, is the only Way to save a Kingdom, or any Society from Ruine, since it is the only Method prescribed by the Wisdom of God for this purpose. Since History shews, that they who have not taken this Course, have been ruin'd: Since Sin has a natural Tendency, not only to make the Sinner himself miserable, but others also

with whom he converses. And finally to destroy the Society of which he is. For if Wickedness do naturally bring along with it publick Calamities, then there can be no Way to escape them, but by forsaking that Sin which is the Cause of them.

4. Righteousness preserves a Nation, and upholds a Society, and advances it. So saith Solomon, *Righteousness exalts a Nation; — the Throne is established by Righteousness.* Therefore Sin must depress, lessen, weaken, and foruine a Nation, and make Thrones themselves shake and totter.

Nothing so high which Sin will not pull down; nothing so strong, which it will not break. This we must conclude, when we consider, that it threw the Angels from the height of Glory and Excellency in which they were seated.

It may be farther enquired, when I say, that Repentance is the only Way to preserve a bad People from Ruine: 1. Whether that will do it, or no? whether it always does this? 2. Whether it be not a general, an Universal Reformation that must have this Effect? If so, of what Avail will their, or my Repentance be to the Publick?

To the first, I reply, Tho a People may be in that Condition, tho Noah, and Daniel, and Job should intercede for them, their Prayers should not be heard, and tho they may have so filled up the Measure of their Iniquities, that nothing more can be done, but to weep over their Miseries, as it seems

to

to have been the Case of *Jerusalem*, when our Saviour wept over it, and said, *O that thou hadst known ! &c.* Tho this may be the Case sometimes, yet there can be no Instance produced out of History where a People repented, who were not saved.-- Two famous Examples we have to prove the contrary, that of *Nebuchadnezzar*, and that of *Nineveh*.

The first is recorded, *Dan. 4. 25, 26, and 34, &c.* where *Daniel*, interpreting his Dream, tells *Nebuchadnezzar*, that he shall be driven from among Men, and be in a most miserable Condition, till he should know, that the *Most High* rules in the Kingdom of Men:-- And that his Kingdom should be sure, and return to him after he should know that the Heavens rule; that is, so know, as to submit to God's Government. And therefore he counsels him to break off his Sins by Repentance, and his Iniquities by shewing Mercy to the Poor, as the only Way to lengthen out his Tranquillity. But though he would not be advised thus to prevent his sufferings, which therefore came upon him; yet as soon as he lift up his Eyes to Heaven, his Understanding returned: And when he acknowledged God, blessing and praising the Most High, and was perswaded, that his Kingdom is over all; and that those who walk in Pride, he can abase.-- As soon as he stooped and submitted himself to God's Government, he was established in his own Kingdom, and excellent Majesty was added to him; that is, when he repented, he was re-instated in his Throne. The

The other is in *Jona* 3. 4. to the End, the Destruction of that great City was to be within forty Days : And upon their Repentance, i. e. not only their Fasting and Praying, their Sack-cloth and Mourning, but their turning every one from the evil of their Ways, and the Violence in their Hands. It is said, God seeing this, repented of the Evil which he had said he would bring upon them; that is, he did it not.

From these two Examples we may be encouraged to hope, that Repentance is the sure, as well as the only Way to preserve or restore Publick Peace: that as we can have no Reason to expect the Publick Safety in any other Way, so we have good Ground to hope for it in this. This for the first Enquiry.

To the second; Whether the Repentance must be general; and if it be not, then to what purpose will be my particular and personal Reformation? I answer,

1. The more general Repentance is, the more available it will be for the Publick Good: the more Men leave off their sinful Practices, the more Efficacy it will have to divert the Judgments of God: the more he will be induced to shew mercy to that People, where King and Subjects, one and other do reform, as it was in *Nineveh*.

2. Every one ought to help forward this general Repentance, as much as in him lies; he should exercise it himself, do his own part, reform himself, and by his Example contribute to other Men's Reformation also; he

he should do what he can to bring all others to Repentance, and that can no way be done better than by his own.

3. If the Reformation be not universal, nor yet general, that the greatest part do not amend, which is to be desired ; nay, tho very few should, yet who knows of what efficacy the Repentance of a few may be for the preservation of a Kingdom ?

That never-to-be-forgot passage, *Gen. 18.* where *Abraham* pleads with God on behalf of *Sodom*, and received this most gracious return ; that if there were but a few Righteous Persons, even Ten, he would spare all the place for their sakes. This should encourage us to be good, tho the generality be not : For who knows but we may make up such a number, that God for our sakes will spare our Country from Destruction ? However,

4. We shall have this Satisfaction, that we have done our Duty, have not been wanting on our part to preserve it ; so that the Destruction of our Native Land, and the Miseries that come on the Inhabitants of it, shall not be laid to our Charge. It shall not be said, that we had a hand in bringing on the Calamities that befall us ; and this will afford us great comfort, however matters go with us. For if we should be involved in the Common Calamity ; it will be a most reviving Consideration, that we were not the Guilty Causes of it. And if we escape, this will be a delightful reflection, that we did

did what in us lay, to preserve our Countrey from Ruin.

But, perhaps I am no way guilty of those Sins, for which the Church or Kingdom suffers; and how can I repent of Sins I have not committed, of other Men's Sins?

1. As to this, consider, Are you not guilty of some Sins? If you be, as you cannot deny, then know that you have done something towards the bringing down Judgments on your Land; for every Sin helps to fill up the measure, every Sin contributes towards the Publick Calamity: Therefore you have something to do, to bewail and to amend those Sins of which you have been Guilty.

2. If you have not in your own Persons done those Wickednesses, which have cried to Heaven for Vengeance, yet have you in no kind been accessary to them? have you not abetted others in the practice of them? have you not given them some countenance at least? have you not smiled at a wicked Speech? have you heartily opposed, and done what you could to hinder them from being committed? have you by discourse or countenance shewn your dislike of, or given any check to such Wickednesses? have you used that power you have to restrain them? If not, you then come in to a share of the guilt.

For tho you did not act the Sin your self, yet if you either promoted it in others, or did not oppose it as you had opportunity, you

you are an Offender before God : And this is one of your other Mens Sins, of which you are to repent, as well as of those that are more properly and strictly your own.

3. If your Conscience acquit you in this also, yet you are to exercise Repentance on occasion of those Sins in which you had no hand, nor was in any manner accessory to them.

Repentance, as I have said, contains in it an hatred of all Sin — where-ever it is, whether mine own, or other men's. — And therefore he that can see the Sins of others, (which indeed he allows not in himself, nor will practise) without detestation and displeasure ; he shews hereby, that he does not so much hate Sin, as he fears the evil Consequents of it. He shews perhaps some aversion to it, that is in his own complexional temper, which does not amount to an hatred of it ; for that would be universal.

I am sure that he who abstains from that Sin himself, which yet he dislikes not in another, he either wants a sense of the evil of Sin, or is destitute of true Charity to other Men, or both : either of which discover his Repentance to be defective.

Thus then, tho we were in no kind guilt of the Offences our selves, which have brought Destruction upon a Nation ; yet we must, on the occasion of other Men's Offending, actuate our Repentance, and exercise our displeasure or hatred against all Sin ; we must bewail the Sins of our Brethren.

Thus

Thus Lot did, as has been said. And that this is a most acceptable performance in the sight of God, may appear from *Ezek. 9. 4.* Where God is said to bid the Man, with the ink-horn by his side, to go through the City, and set a mark upon the Foreheads of the Men that sigh, and that cry for all the Abominations that were done in the midst of it; those which were done by others; and he gave charge that the Destroyers should not come near those that had the Mark.

This may serve for Answer to that Query; How far we are concern'd to repent, where we our selves have not offended.

This Argument which I have now treated of, is of so vast importance, and so indispensibly necessary to be understood and practised by every one, that I think it cannot be too much insisted on, nor too earnestly pressed: however, hoping that I have said enough to perswade them that will consider, (and nothing is enough to them that will not,) and also to excite Men to consider; I shall now put an end to what I shall say on this matter.

And since it is possible, that what has been generally discoursed, as the concern of all Men, may be, as it often happens, no Man's care; but, as is commonly said, what is every bodies business, is no bodies; so, what is ev'ry ones Duty, none will do it. And since, perhaps, some weaker Minds may be distracted and lost amongst the many things which have been said; I shall therefore

fore briefly recapitulate, and give you one view of what has been more largely handled; and withal make a particular application to our selves of what has been discoursed hitherto more generally.

That then to which our Saviour here exhorts, and I have been endeavouring to perswade, is Repentance, *i. e.* a Change, a Reformation both of our Hearts and Lives; which I have thus explained: That being fully perswaded of the great Evil that Sin is, and does; we would hate and fear it above all other Evils, that we would be affected to it, as the worst of Evils; as that which is in its self, and in its effects not only the greatest of Evils, but all Evils whatsoever. And that therefore we would abstain and fly from the practice of it, from all kinds, from all appearances of it. And on the other hand, that being convinced of the Goodness, the Excellency, the Profitableness, and Becomingness of Holiness and Vertue, we would prefer it before all things, and follow after it with the greatest earnestness, and practise it with all our might.

The sum of what has been Discoursed.

To be thus minded, and to do thus constantly, to continue so to Death; this is that Repentance to Salvation which the Gospel requires, and to which so great Promises are made.

I have shewn how fit, how just this is, how well it becomes us, how reasonable, how righteous it is.

I have likewise set before you the most invaluable benefits that accrue to every one who thus reforms : They are quiet in their own Minds from the tormenting sense of Guilt. They are restored to the Favour of God , are sure of Eternal Life.

I have also proved the absolute necessity of this Amendment ; because without it we cannot be happy, we must be necessarily miserable.

I have shewed also, what good Effects this must have on the Community ; and that it is the only way to preserve a sinful State from Ruin.

Now , surely, every one that believes these things, must either be thus resolved, or he proclaims himself a perfect Madman ; nay, an unnatural Monster : For he acts not only against Reason, but against the very Nature of Man, by which every one is inclined to avoid his own Ruin , to seek his own Good, to have a regard to his God, and to love and serve his Country.

If there be any who have been so wanting to themselves, and to the opportunities which God has given them, either through foolish stupidity, or laziness, or despondency, that they are not able to overcome their sinful dispositions, nor effect so great a change ; or having been so busy in other matters, they have not been at leisure for such a work as this ; I in the Name, and for the Honour of God and our Saviour ;
and

and out of especial Regard to their Souls, intreat and beseech them, that they will now begin.—That which I call upon you to do, I lay plainly before you in these following Particulars.

1. Take your selves aside, retire from Company, leave off all other Business, or whatever may disturb your Thoughts:—do this as soon as you can possibly; defer it not till another Day.

Directions for
the Practice of
Repentance.

2. And when you have entred into your Chamber, consider seriously your Ways,—what you have been doing, how you have lived all your Days, what your Behaviour has been towards God? Whether you have lived under a due Sense of him, acknowledging him in all your Ways? Or, whether he has not been in all your Thoughts, but you have forgot him, Days without Number? Whether you have sanctified him in your Hearts, worshipped him in Spirit and Truth, drawn near to him with Reverence, and godly Fear; or been without God in the World, either refusing or neglecting his Worship altogether, or else giving a prophane or hypocritical Worship? Consider whether you have loved and feared, whether you have serv'd and honour'd him in your Lives? Or, whether you have hated and despised him? Whether you have dishonoured and disobeyed him?

Think also what has been your Carriage towards Men, Friends, and Enemies, Strangers, Acquaintance, Neighbours, Relations, Kindred, Governours, Servants, Superiours,

Inferiours, Equals.——Think how you have carried your selves to all Men? Whether you have been just and honest, sincere and true, charitable, merciful, kind, bountiful, or the contrary?

And lastly, consider well, Whether you have acted as becomes Men, and have wisely and diligently pursued your own greatest Perfection, and truest Interest? Or, whether you have been so foolish, so careless, so lazy, as to neglect that which is the best in your own Minds;— nay, not only so, but so unnatural and monstrous as to oppose these, and to run upon your Destruction; that is, have you govern'd your Appetites and Passions, and all your Faculties by Reason, and the Rules of Sobriety? Or have you laid the Reins upon your Necks, and let them run at random?

3. When you have set your Life before you; consider, Whether your Actions have been good, or bad? Whether such as became, or were unseemly for you to do? Whether profitable and beneficial, or hurtful and mischievous to your selves or others? that is, weigh well according to what God has shewn us to be good and evil, by any of the Manifestations of his Will, whether what you have done be agreeable or repugnant to the Divine Law and Will?

4. When you have resolved this Matter, then set your selves to find out the infinite evil of Sin, and the unexpressible good that is in Vertue. Think with your selves what
that

that means, to violate the Laws of Heaven, to do evil ; that this is an unreasonable, an unnatural Act to your selves ; that this is, to be most disingenuous and unthankful, base and unworthy towards God ; and the worst, and most pernicious Thing that can be done to our Fellow-Creatures. For, by sinning, we do our utmost to disturb and confound that Order, and break those Bonds, by which the whole Creation subsists, and is held together.

Think also how well all Vertue becomes, and how exceedingly beneficial it is to us ; how honourable and pleasing to God, and how useful and necessary to Mankind.

Let your own Nature and Reason, your and other Men's Observation and Experience, especially let the Divine Oracles inform you of these Matters.--And if you will be concluded by all, by any of these, your Minds will be assured, that there is nothing in the World so bad as Sin, nor so good as Vertue.

If you will hearken to the low Voice of human Nature it self, that will whisper this unto you.--- When we violate any Law written in our Hearts, does not Nature it self at first start, and as it were recoil from such an Action ? Do we not do it with Reluctancy ? Are we not afterwards haunted with Regret, and tormented with bitter Remorse and Anguish ? And is there any greater Torture the Mind of Man can endure, than such a vexatious Reflection as this ?

If we consult Reason, it will shew us, that there is nothing in the World so unalterably evil, as Sin, nothing so directly contrary to, and destructive of the best, the top of Human Nature, as Wickedness —

If we will be taught by Experience, that also will inform us of the great Evil of Sin, in that, notwithstanding all its fair Promises, we have reaped nothing but Shame and Sorrow ; Disappointment and Disquiet have been the Fruits that have grown on that Root of Bitterness ;-- and such as have not been consequent on any other of the most dreaded Evils which we have undergone :— Whereas we have felt unspeakable Joy and Pleasure springing up in our Souls, from a Review of any good and virtuous Performance.

Not to mention any more ; If we will go to the Scriptures, they put it out of all doubt, that Sin is in it self, and its effects, not only the worst of Evils, but all Evil whatsoever : And that nothing is so good as Holiness ; nothing so futable, so beneficial to a Man himself, and to the World, as this.

5. Let us dwell upon these Considerations until our Souls be inflamed into Affections futable to these Thoughts, *i. e.* till we hate Sin, and love Vertue above all Things.

6. Let us maintain these Affections in our Souls in such manner, as they may influence our Practice, that we may constantly abstain from Evil, and do Good. Let us keep up such an hearty Hatred of Sin, and
Love

Love of Holiness, that we may both cease from all known Wickedness, and do all known Vertue; and also endeavour after a farther Discovery of Good and Evil than we have yet made.

7. Do not satisfy your selves with these Perswasions and Affections concerning Sin and Vertue in general, but apply them to Particulars. The common Observation, *Dolus in generalibus*, is no where truer, nor more mischievous than in this very Case.

For how are some delighted with Vertue and Goodness, when they hear a general Discourse of its excellent Nature, of the great Benefits it brings! And yet for any particular Vertue they have no Esteem, no Affection at all. And they will declaim against Sin for its Turpitude, and seem to apprehend the mischievous Nature of it; but yet there is no Sin in Particular which they cannot like and away with very well. Therefore be sure to bring down your general Apprehensions and Affections unto particular Vertues and Vices.— Indeed,

8. To all Particulars, but most especially those Sins to which by your Nature, or by your long use you are most inclined; or of which you are in greatest Danger from your Employment, or the Opportunity you have of doing them easily and safely; or which will be most commended from the Authorities and Examples of others, and the Customs of the Time and Place in which you live.

In like manner have special regard to those particular Vertues, from which by Nature and Complexion, or by long contrary use of your selves you are most averse; or which either your secular Business, or want of Opportunity to practise them, will render most difficult; or in doing which you will run most against the Stream, and be almost singular; that is, see that you look on every particular Sin to be evil; that you hate it from your Heart, that you cease from it.— But be sure to be thus perswaded and affected, and thus to do especially in those Sins which are most easie and pleasant to you, on such accounts as I have mentioned.— In like manner think well of, and love and practise every Vertue, but most especially those, which on any account are most displeasing and difficult to you. For instance,

If by my natural Temper, by long Practise, by my Calling, by the Company I converse with, I am tempted to Sensuality, to Excess of any fleshly Gratifications.— If on all these Accounts this may be call'd mine Iniquity; that which I have ofteneft been overtaken with, that which I love most, that of which I am in greatest Danger; I will then take special heed to this, that my Mind be most thoroughly perswaded of the most pernicious Evil of this Carnality; I will be careful, that my Soul be under such an actual, and explicate, and constant Abhorrence of it, that I shall be most effectually engaged to abstain from it. So likewise,
If

If neither my particular Temper, nor former Practice incline me to Devotion; if neither my Business, nor my Company befriend, but rather conspire to oppose and hinder it; and if the Mode of the Times, and of the Place in which I live, do discountenance it; I will take care in this Case to consider it so fully, till my Mind be so fully assured of the Fitness, of the Necessity, the Excellency of a Religious Mind and Behaviour, and till I be even ravished with the Beauty of this Part of Holiness.-- And I will charge my self with the Practice of it at every fit Season, even then when it will be most difficult and dangerous.

9. The last Direction I shall give for the Conduct of our Repentance, is, That we begin with the most heinous Sins, the most notorious Wickednesses, and reform them first: such as prophane Swearing, Cursing, Blasphemies, Lying, Cruelty, Oppression, Injustice, &c.

Let us also, in the first Place, set our selves to the doing of the weightier Matters of the Law. This is regular and orderly, when we begin with these, we imitate Nature, which in the Formation of the *Fœtus*, begins with the most vital Parts. We take the same Course that Builders do, who lay the Foundation, and finish all the substantial Parts of the Structure, before they top it. And as it would be preposterous in them to think of Ornaments, Colours, or Images, till they have set the Walls; so is

it no less absurd for Men in Matters of Religion, to busie themselves about Ceremonies, and external Circumstances, whilst the Inwards, the Vitals, the Substantials, are not minded.

This is the Sum of what I would say to those that would now begin to amend their Ways.— And the same may be said to them who have already begun, and who continue and go on to reform: They must do their first Works, as Scripture expresses it. They must daily retire, and consider their Ways, and keep their Minds under these Perswasions, and in these Affections. They must preserve these Purposes in their Hearts for ever; which, I hope, none will look on as too difficult, or tedious: I am sure none will be discouraged by such Conceits, who believes and considers the extraordinary Assistances he shall certainly have in the doing it, the Pleasure and Satisfaction of being engaged in it, and the unconceivable Bliss in which it will issue at the last.

A serious Address to the Inhabitants of this Land.

And now at last, I address my self to us that are the Inhabitants of this Land, and of this City; and upon this very Account I call on all *English Men*, on all that are, and on all that will not own themselves Members of this Church.

I exhort all that dwell in this City, to Repent and Amend; and I think there is the greatest Reason for this that can be. Our Sins are many, and great Sins, that if not forsaken, will make our Souls miserable

ble for ever ; and will certainly and presently ruin our State, and throw us into Confusion : Sins they are that have a natural tendency to this ; and their Cry must be gone up to Heaven, they are such heinous, such abominable Wickednesses, such open and daring Defiances of the Divine Majesty.

And as our Sins are great, so our opportunities of Repentance are greater than other Men's ; and they are yet continued by God's merciful Providence — We have also more Assistances and Helps to this than others have. And God by the Dispensations of his Providence has most plainly called us to Repentance : His Kingdom is not only near, but is come amongst us.

I will name some heads of those many and great Provocations of which we are guilty.

I. Are we not grown Irreligious ? We, whose Glory it has been that we Feared God ; that our *English* Temper seemed to have Piety woven in it ; but alas ! how is this our Crown fallen from our Head ? How have we cast off both the Religion of Nature and of Institution, of God, and of Christ ? How many amongst us do openly avow Atheism ? And as we have lived a sense of God out of our own Souls ; so we endeavour to talk it out of other Men's minds, to discourse God out of the World.

A vain as well as wicked Attempt, in which Nature will be too hard for us.

Others

Others that are more cunning than to expose themselves to Censure for such Discourses ; and perhaps have not yet blotted God out of their Minds ; yet they live Wickedly , as if they believed there was no God : They have no sense of, they express no regard to him ; they never consider the Works of God which he does in the World, and amongst us : They Obey not his Laws, nor take heed to do that, which they cannot but know (if they think at all) that it is his Will : And 'tis horrible Impiety not to think whether it be God's Will or no.

Let me only instance in one thing, That of Prophane Swearing ; a thing unallow'd, and not so much practis'd by Heathens : Or, if we escape Prophaneness, yet how guilty are we of Hypocrisy ; of seeming Religious and Devout when we are not ; of drawing near to God with our Mouths, when our Hearts are far from him : And who of us is there that gives unto God that Love or Fear, or who has that Faith and Hope in him which are his due ?

And if Men be not destitute of Natural Religion, yet how deficient are they in the Christian— they understand not the very End of Christianity, but so pervert the Gospel, that they make it serve Sin, encouraging themselves in wicked Practices by wrested Texts, by gross mistakes of the Gospel-Doctrine.

How

How do some deny even the Lord that bought them? How do they undervalue, and slight his Performances? How many are there that make little or no account of the Blood of the Covenant, as too plainly appears by the small Numbers that care to Commemorate his Death? which neglect of that one Institution of our dying Saviour, proclaims to the World what Thoughts we have of him: And is this the return that we make to our dearest Lord, who died for us, that we will not so much as Commemorate his Death?

Is this our Carriage to God such as he might expect from a People to whom he had shewed such Mercies? Do we not add most horrible Ingratitude to our Impiety? God may justly take up the words of the Prophet, and say of us, as he said of *Israel*; *Hear O Heavens, and give ear O Earth, for I have nourished and brought up Children, and they rebelled against me: the Ox knoweth his Owner, &c.* But I go on, and shall but mention the rest.

II. Our Irreverence towards our Superiours and Governours. Do Children honour their natural Parents? Are Servants in subjection to their Masters? Or, Do the Younger reverence the Aged? I doubt we are sensible of great Defects in all these: But where is he to be found, that behaves himself in any measure as he ought towards his Governours? We the Ministers of Christ have a Name that we have the Rule

Rule over you ; but alas ! what insignificant Cyphers are we made ? Where are we so much as advised with in the momentous matters of your Souls ? (in other matters than these we profess we have nothing to do) Or, who is he that follows the Counsels he receives from us ? And as to our Supreme Earthly Governours, the King and his Counsel, how can we say we Reverence them, When

1. We so openly, so lavishly, so rudely, so groundlessly censure all their Proceedings ? Is not this done every where ? Do not Men who have got a little Skill by reading a few Histories ; or, it may be only our own *Gazetts* and *Intelligences*, commence States-men ; and immediately pass their Verdict on this or that Action of the State ; and confidently aver it to be ill and unwisely done ?

I need not set forth the unbecomingness of every Subjects arraigning his Sovereign at his own Bar ; every one sees and nauseates such Indecency, when they who are wholly incompetent, will take upon them to judge.

2. Our Irreverence is seen sufficiently by our disobedience to, by our despising of the King's Laws ; such as not only are, but we own to be lawful ; I need not instance in particulars, every ones Observation may do it.

3. Our most Unchristian, nay, inhumane Uncharitableness to each other ; Where are the two or three pairs of true Friends

Friends to be found? Where dwells fervent, nay, where is undissembled Love and Charity to be met with?

Alas! instead of Friendship, of Good-will and Kindness; instead of doing good offices, we hate one another, and that with a cruel and a bitter hatred, as tho we were not Christians, not Country-men, no, not Men.

We eagerly contend one with another; we dispute, shall I say, or scold and rail at, we reproach and calumniate, we bespatter one another with false and foul Language.

We divide from each other, not only in our Religious Assemblies, but in civil converse also we keep at a distance.

These are some of our great Sins at this day; and what can we expect will become of these things?

To these I may add,

4. Our senseless Pride. We bear ourselves up much upon the reputation of *English-Men*, i. e. Our Fathers got themselves and us a great Name in the World, for their Courage, their Honesty, their sincere Religion; they endeavoured to match, to out-do all others, in all matters that were Praise-worthy; for these things they were Esteem'd and Honour'd: But what is all this to us their degenerate Children?

If we have cast off our Religion, and are fallen from Piety; if we be not Honest, nor Valiant, nor Industrious, nor Emulators of Good and Vertuous, of Wise
and

and Brave, of ingenious and useful Actions; what have we to do with the Reputation of our Great and good Ancestors?

Take heed, lest while we are so high in our own Conceits, and have such mean Thoughts of our Neighbours, that by this we be not betray'd to Carelesness, and become a Prey to them.

5. I should not pass by our notorious Sensuality, our fulness of Bread, our abundance of Idleness, and all those open Wickednesses, those Whoredoms and unheard-of Impurities that grow on these Roots: But I must break off. Only

Let me desire you to consider seriously, Whether the Sins I have named, be not too too rife among us? And, Whether they do not threaten our Ruin? Are not destruction of a People, the natural, the necessary effects of such Causes? And does not Divine Vengeance follow such Practices? Did ever People cast off Religion, and prosper? Has not God turned away in Wrath from them, that in Impiety have turned away from him? Is it not his constant method to slay those that will not have him to rule over them?

And where Order is not kept, where Laws are not obeyed, not regarded, where Governors are unreasonably censured and slighted; must not Confusion follow in that disorderly Society? Does not Disobedience and Contempt of Governors usher in Rebellion? And is it possible we should bite and devour one another, without being destroy'd?

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By this we lay our selves open to Foreigners ; or, without them we shall do the work our selves, we shall be destroyed one of another.

Now then, since the Everlasting Happiness of our Souls, since the Preservation of our Country, that is, all that is desirable and dear to us both in this and the other World, depends on our Reformation ; I beseech you let us all in the first place see to the amending of our own ways : And then also when we are thus converted, let us help our Brethren.

I exhort and beseech you all to do thus, both by the Mercies and Judgments of God which have been, and which are yet amongst us : Remember our late horrible Confusions, the restoring our ancient Government ; Think on the Plague which raged amongst us, and on the Fire which devoured our Habitations ; Think on the dangers we were in from the Rage and Malice of Men ; and on our Deliverance thus far from all their Conspiracies : And let us by all these Dispensations, be led to Repentance : So neither our own Sins, nor our Enemies Malice, shall be our Ruin. *Amen.*



OF THE
F R U I T S
 O F
REPENTANCE.

S. Matth. ch. 3. v. 8. *Bring forth therefore Fruits meet for Repentance.*

J O H N the *Baptist*, had in the Beginning of this Chapter, called the *Israelites* to Repentance upon this Account, That *the Kingdom of God*, which he would set up by the *Messiah*, was now at the very Doors: a Kingdom that would prevail against all Opposition, and break in pieces all Power that exalted it self against it, and destroy all that would not be subject to its Laws; but would save and protect all its Subjects.

Occasion of
the Text.

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Thus

Thus *John's* Hearers understood him; and thus he meant, as is plain from the seventh Verse, where he asks them, Who had fore-warned them to flee from the Wrath that was coming, and would certainly fall on all those that would not be the Subjects of God's Kindgom?—*The Wrath to come*, seems to be a more expresse Declaration of that which was more implicitly menaced in that (by them well enough understood) Phrase, *the Kingdom of God*.

It is observable, that the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* coming to *John's* Baptism, made him wonder; *Who*, saies he, *has fore-warned you?* He could not think, that they should be so obedient to the Exhortation which he had made, because they were so very wicked, and yet withal so conceited of their own Righteousness. He could not tell how to believe, that what he had said, should prevail with them in this Publick Manner, to acknowledg themselves Sinners, and that they stood in need of Repentance: Therefore he asks: How it came to pass, by what Means they were brought to this, which was the only Course they could take to save themselves, and their Nation from Ruine?

And as this seem'd strange to *John* the Baptist, so it is in itself wonderful, that any one who is wicked, and an Hypocrite, who is unjust, and covetous, and uncharitable, and yet proud, and self-conceited, having a Form of Godliness, whereby he deceives
other,

others; and imposes on himself too : It is a very rare Thing, that such an one comes to Repentance. For he is so fast tied with the Bonds of Iniquity, which are so twisted with a false Conceit of his own Goodness, that he cannot get loose. All Attempts that are made upon him, are weak and vain : For he either keeps them at a Distance by the Out-works of gross Sin ; or, if those be batter'd down, yet he retires into the inmost and strongest Citadel of Self-conceit, in which he remains for the most part impregnable.

Inward Wickedness armed with a Form of Godliness, and an Opinion that he is Righteous, makes a Man unconquerable by almost all the Methods which God uses to reclaim and reform us. This was the Case of the *Scribes and Pharisees* ; and such as are thus, are at the greatest Distance from the Kingdom of God,——as our Saviour tells them they were ; and that *the Publicans and Sinners* entred in before them.

John the Baptist having express'd his Wonder at these Men's coming to his Baptism, and by receiving it, acknowledging themselves Sinners, professing, that they were sensible of their Evil, and that they would amend : To the end they might not beguile themselves, as well as others, by Hypocritick Pretences, as they had formerly, he calls upon them for some real and good Fruits of this their seeming Reformation. Also supposing these Professions to be real, that this hopeful, though unexpected Be-

ginning might not prove successful and vain; that they might not, by doing no more, lose what they had already done; or by their returning back to the Sins they had now forsaken, make this Repentance ineffectual for their Preservation, he exhorts them to *bring forth Fruits* worthy of, or *meet for Repentance*; that is, that they would do those Works which are suitable to Repentance, and which become those who profess to reform.

A Parallel-place to this we find *Acts* 26. 20. where St. Paul tells *Agrippa* what he preached to the *Jews*, to the *Samaritans*, and to the *Gentiles*, viz. *That they should repent, and turn unto God; and do Works meet for Repentance.*

This then seems to be the Sense of this Exhortation of *John the Baptist*. If you be, as you seem to be, true Penitents, then behave yourselves as such; live as becomes those that make this Profession, do those Works that may assure your selves, and testify to others, that you are real and sincere; let it appear by your Conversation and Carriage, that you do repent and amend indeed. If the Seeds of God, of Vertue and Holiness, be sown in your Souls, let them grow up, and bring forth Fruit in your Lives,-- that so you may escape that Destruction which your Sin is bringing upon you, and which you have done thus much to prevent: But all this will be in vain, and to no purpose, unless you go on to live good Lives, as you profess you will; unless

unless you continue to do as you have now begun, and carry on these Beginnings to their Perfection.

For (as he tells them afterward) *The Ax is laid to the Root of the Tree, and every Tree that bears not good Fruit, is hewn down*; and notwithstanding the Leaves and Blossoms (if I may so far follow that Metaphor) of Professions and Pretences, nay, of Intentions and Resolutions of some good Beginnings; yet if they did not continue, and go on, if these Buds and Blossoms did not grow up into the Fruits of an holy and vertuous Life, all their Professions, Appearances, and Beginnings would come to nothing, would not avail to secure them from the Miseries and Desolations that were coming upon that People.

This was *John Baptist's* Counsel to the *Jews*, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who made a shew of Repentance.— And let us all take the same Counsel our selves.

If we seem to repent, let us repent indeed; if we begin to amend, let us continue and go on, endeavouring to perfect what we have well begun; that so we may not fall short of the End of what we have already wrought. If we have changed our Minds, and have Dispositions and Resolutions to be, and do good, let us also amend our Ways and Doings; let us do that Good that we are inclined, and purpose to do; *i. e.* let us bring forth Fruits, do Works, live Lives meet for Repentance, so as becomes those who profess it.

For our Furtherance in this, let us consider, 1st. What Fruits or Works are those which are meet for Repentance; what Carriage and Behaviour is suitable to such a Profession. 2^{ly}. What Obligation is there on us to bring forth such Fruits?

What Fruits
are meet for
Repentance.

I. The Fruits which be seem those that are upon the Amendment of their Lives, out of a serious Sense that they have done amiss, are various; I shall only reckon up some of the natural Issue, or the almost inseparable Companions of such a Change, where it is true and real.

Some of these chiefly respect a Man's self, some other Men, some God. — Again; some look back, and some forward; some on the Life that is past, others on that which is now, and which is yet to come.

Some of these, called Fruits, may be also the Causes of Repentance; as 'tis often seen, that the same things are mutual Causes and Effects of each other. — Nay, some of them may be the Parts of that which is in a complex, or general Notion called Repentance: as what hinders, but that the vital, and more substantial Parts of the Body may have Influence both on the making and preserving its Fellow-members? Does not the Fruit that the Tree bears, carry in it that Seed, which, if it be sown, will grow up into a Tree? What hinders then, but that the Fruits which Repentance brings forth, may also bring forth Repentance? at least, that these Children may maintain and cherish their Parents? The,

1. Is

1. Is a very hearty Sorrow and Shame because of the Sins which I have committed; how pleasant, how profitable soever Sin once was, it is now become the Matter of my greatest Trouble; the deepest, and the most inward piercing Sorrows of my Soul, arise from the Sense of my Sin and Guilt.

1. Hearty Sorrow and shame for Sins committed.

I now see, and am sensible of the great, and by me irreparable Mischiefs that have been done by my Sin. I have done the greatest harm I can do to others, by my ill Example drawing them on to the like Wickedness. This is the greatest Mischief I can do to Mankind.— And how much by me has been done for the propagating of Wickedness, I know not: For who can tell of how vast Extent one ill Action may be? Or, who can set bounds to the ill Influences of one single bad Act? Besides, I know not what Injury I have done, nor how Prejudicial I have been to the temporal and secular, as well as the spiritual and eternal Interest of my Neighbour?

Who can say (thinks the Penitent) how many Stumbling-blocks I have laid in Men's Way to Happiness, by my Sin and Folly? Who knows how many have stumbled at these, and fallen into Perdition? And will it not grieve any one to the Heart to think, that he has been an Occasion of Men's being eternally miserable? But if he has been any Way accessory to their present Calamities; If through his Injustice, his Oppression, his Fraud, his Rashness, nay, or, un-

charitable Neglect and Carelesness, any Families be impoverish'd, that they have not Bread to eat, nor Cloaths to wear, nor an House to dwell in; if others be brought into great straits and hardship by my falseness, or folly, or unkindness, or by any fault of mine; so long as there is any humanity remaining in me (and if there be any Good there will be this) I cannot but be extreamly troubled that I was ever guilty of it.

And besides, the harm I have done others by my Sin, it is far greater that I have done my self; and the Thoughts of this will open the Sluces of Sorrow:

For I shall see that I have been the cause of so great Evil and Mischief to my self, that it seems almost irremediable; that nothing but the Infinite Goodness, and the Omnipotent Grace of God can save me from utter Destruction.

I have by Sinning, maim'd my Faculties, corrupted my Nature; that in me which was intended by God for my good State and Happiness, is now become the furtherance and increase of my Misery.

I have, by my frequently repeated sinful actions, left in my Nature such a disposition to them, that without a very Special Assistance of God's Grace, I cannot keep my self from them.

And, besides all the Temporal Inconveniences which I suffer by my Wickedness; such is the demerit of it, which without God's Infinite Mercy, that as I have made
my

my self liable to, so I shall eternally lie under most exquisite and remediless Torments.

Thus will a Man be grieved, who considers the Evil he has done by his Sin, both against other Men, and to his own Soul.

But how will this Grief be augmented, when he thinks how he has disobey'd the Laws of Heaven, opposed the designs of Infinite Goodness and Wisdom; set himself against God, cast contempt upon his Glorious Majesty, dishonoured his Name, disordered his Government? When he sees that the malign Influences of his Sin have gone up above this Earth, and reached the very Heavens; that good Minds, that Angels of Glory, that the Ever-Blessed God have been in some sort affected by his evil Actions? This must hugely swell his Grief, and if there be any Ingenuity, Rivers of Tears will run down his Cheeks because of this.

Nor is this a common Sorrow, such as we have for Accidents and inevitable Calamities; but such as Men have for their own Faults and Follies, *i. e.* It is a Grief aggravated and increased by Shame.

For the Repenting Sinner considers, that it was in his own Choice, he might have done otherwise: All the Mischief which he has done to others, all the Evil he has done to the Name and Honour of God; all the Misery he has brought on himself, is to be im-

imputed only to his own Folly and Mad-
ness.

All this Evil is to be put on the account of the unreasonable Choice which he has made; and when he considers how unreasonable indeed he was in all such practices, how grossly foolish, how altogether unaccountable such doings were; when he thinks how many Reasons, and how strong Obligations he had to do otherwise: This will not only fill his Eyes with Tears, but cover his Face with Blushing and Shame; and he will be confounded at the apprehensions of his not only more than brutish Stupidity; but at his Wickedness, not much inferior to the Devils.

Thus will he be affected, such will be his Sorrow and Shame, who truly repents. There is none but sees, that whosoever is heartily perswaded of the great Evil of his Sin, his Soul will be pierced with these Sorrows, and he will be confounded in himself, that he has been the Author of so much mischief; so that these are manifestly of those Fruits that are meet for Repentance, such as indeed seem inseparable from it.

For altho I do not place Repentance in any one single inward Passion, much less in the expression of it: Yet I think it is never unaccompanied with them both; allowance being made for the difference of Men's Tempers, whereby they are more or less disposed to Passion in general, or to this or that
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fort of Passion in particular, or to the outward expressions of them.

To what I have said, let me add, that I speak not all this while of a transient Sorrow, or a vanishing Shame that is presently over, that is once and no more: but I speak of an inward and a lasting Grief that will abide always, and arise in the Soul whenever there is occasion to excite it; that is, as oft as it thinks of its past Follies; it will be abashed and confounded; it will be greatly troubled at the remembrance of them.

He can never think of what he has done amiss, but it causes not a slight superficial, but an hearty and inward grief and shame, which is not done away by the greatest assurance which Men have of God's Mercy, but rather increased; for it must needs grieve and shame them so much the more, when they are more sensible of the goodness of God, against whom they have sinn'd.

These are the Fruits of Repentance, and such as remain: not any of those that it may be supposed to bring forth at first, but presently fell off; No, but as true Repentance never ceases, so neither is it ever to be separated from inward grief and abashment for the wickedness of our past Life. If we continue to hate Sin, we shall also continue to be sorry and ashamed that we have sinn'd.

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Let no man think that this is needless, or that it will hinder us from rejoicing; For it will serve very good ends both in our selves and others; making us all shy of Sin that ends in sorrow and shame; and it is so far from lessening our Joy, that it does increase it, as every thing that is natural and becoming does.

2.
Humility and
low Thoughts
of a Man's self.

2. Another Fruit of Repentance is to be displeased and angry with a Man's self; to be abased in his Thoughts of himself.

When a true Penitent looks back upon his Life, he sees so great folly, so much wickedness, such stark-madness, that he cannot but think very meanly and contemptibly of himself. He must judge himself low and little, far short of the perfection of which he is capable, and for which he was designed: He will look on himself, as not having the understanding of a Man, as being sunk below his rank; nay, as in some sense worse than the Beasts themselves, because they do not fall short of their end, as he does of his.

He cannot glory in himself; for the sense of Sin, and of Guilt, presently pulls down every high Thought, and lays him in the Dust; he confesses himself so obnoxious, and so corrupted, that nothing less than the goodness of God can save him from Misery; and that nothing less powerful than the Blessed Spirit, can renew and restore the decays of his Nature.

He utterly renounces and disclaims all opinion either of Merit, or of Sufficiency in him-

himself : All his Hopes are grounded upon the Infinite Love of God, the valuableness of his Saviour's Performances, and the mighty Efficacy of the Divine Spirit : But for himself, consider'd by himself, he is low, he is nothing in his own eyes.

The remembrance of the many and great Sins and Follies of his past Life; the consideration of how much Evil, and of how little Good he has done, together with the plain and powerful Reasons which he has had to dissuade him from Vice, and to engage him to Holiness; the reflection on these things will give him such a representation of his own most inexcusable Folly, as he cannot but have an indignation against himself.

When he shall think how unreasonably he has lived, without due regard to God; how irreverently, undutifully he has behaved himself; how unthankful, how unjust he has been to his best Benefactor, the Sovereign Lord of all the World; and how he has been taken off from his Duty both to God and Man, for no reason at all; that he has not better'd himself, nor advanced his own interest, by rebelling against God, and injuring his fellow-Creatures; but has indeed plunged himself into the depth of Misery, and made his Case, for all that he can do, desperate. When he considers of all this, must he not be astonish'd, and challenge himself for the most stupid Folly and most desperate Madness that he can be guilty of.

And

And what shall he ever boast of, who has shewn himself as void of Understanding, or any thing that is good, as is possible? Or, how shall he after such things as these ever take Pleasure in himself?

No surely, he that once takes such a view of his past Life, and whose Eyes are opened to see his numberless Iniquities of which he has been guilty, must, with *Job*, *abhor himself, and repent in Dust and Ashes.*

Nay, and his Anger against himself will make him study Revenge, and find out some way to punish the great Offender; he will afflict his Soul, which has so unreasonably, and contrary to its own sense, consented to Iniquity; He will keep under his Body, and bring that into subjection, which has been the occasion of, and temptation to so many Wickednesses.

So it is evident from what has been said, how well it becomes every one that does indeed repent, to be exceedingly humble in his own Thoughts, and to be displeased at himself. He that remembers, that by his own Sin and Folly he made himself as despicable, as miserable as Man can be; how is it possible that he should not think meanly of himself, when if by God's Infinite Mercy, the Saviour of the World had not interposed, he had been irrecoverably lost? Is it possible that such an one should be proud? Is it possible he should not detest and loath himself for the evil of his wicked Life?

3. The next Fruit of Repentance, is an hearty Endeavour to undo all the Evil which I have done by my Sin, as much as in me lies. A true Penitent does not only wish he had never sinn'd, but as far as is possible, he will undo what he has done, by obviating and removing the evil which he has caused.

An hearty endeavour to make amends, by obviating and removing the Evils of which a Man by Sin, has been the cause.

He will not deny, disown or conceal his Sin, for he will confess it freely and fully to God ; and where he apprehends that it will contribute to his amendment ; and where the knowledg of any particular Offences may qualify others either to intercede with God for his Pardon, or to instruct him in his way of Reformation ; he will in such cases declare his Offences to Men also.

I do not therefore understand by Men's undoing of their Sins, their hiding of them; but that they will endeavour what in them lies, to make some reparations of that Honour which God has lost by their Sin ; They will consider what the Name and Honour of God has suffer'd (suppose) by their Oaths, Blasphemies, their Irreligious Discourses, their Sceptical or Atheistical Suggestions ; also how much they have derogated from the Majesty of God, and Honour of his Laws and Government, by their contemptuous Violation of them. And therefore they will now speak of his Nature and Works with Reverence. When they Swear by his Name, it will be with sense and seriousness, they will no more vilify his

his Holy Institutions, nor turn their backs contemptuously upon them, but approach them as opportunity offers, with that Solemnity that becomes them: In a word, all those ways wherein they have caused the Name of God to be blasphemed, or his Laws discredited, they will now avoid; And use their utmost Care to bring Honour to God, and Reputation to Religion.

Again; Whatever ill effects their Wickedness has had on the Souls or Bodies, the Names, or Estates, or Families of others; they will, as much as they can, remove them. If, by their Evil Communications, or the Contagion of an ill Example, they have corrupted the Minds and Manners of others, they will unsay their mischievous Discourses, and acknowledg both the unreasonable and wickedness of them.

If they have wronged them in their Estates, they will, as far as they are able at present, and whenever they shall be able hereafter, make restitution: Restoring to every one to the full what they have unjustly taken from him.

If they have falsely accused any; or, have discoursed of any, so as to defame him, and to detract from his Reputation; they will make him amends, as much as may be, by unsaying their former malicious Discourses, and by divulging his Praises.

If they have disabled his Body from its Functions, by laming, or any way maiming

ing it ; they will do all that they can, to make up the loss. And if they have been so unfortunate as to take away any Man's Life, tho without any fault of theirs, much more, if they have done it wickedly, they will, as well as they can, repair that breach to his Family.

If they have been perversely disobedient to their Governors, Factionous and Seditious in the Society of which they are Members : they will come into good Order, be peaceable and quiet, obedient and governable.

This is the manner of the true Penitent. And is it not a thing well becoming him who professes himself sensible of the Evil of his sinful Life, to retract, to undo it what in him lies ? It ought to be his resolution and care, that the World may not suffer by, nor be worse for him, if it shall not be the better : This he does, as has been said, by saying and doing the contrary to what he said and did, when he did Evil : And this shews it to be very natural, *viz.* Because, if the Penitent finds that he cannot make all so well as it was before his Sin, this causes great Trouble to his Soul ; which plainly shews that the Soul is hindred from doing some natural Act, something which it is inclined to do.

Thus then it appears, that the endeavour of the Repenting Sinner, to restore all into the same good state in which they were before he injured them by his Sin, is another Fruit meet for Repentance : I will only

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ly make two Reflections from this particular.

1. That we should take especial care of those Sins, whereby we take away some Good that cannot be restored again, or cause some Evil which cannot by us be removed.

There are three things, of which by our Wickedness Men may be deprived, which are Losses that can never be made up: And there is a fourth that can very hardly be, and is seldom or never repair'd. The three first are, their Innocency, their Life, and their Time; if we take these from any, we bereave them of that which we can never restore. The other is, their Reputation, which when we have once blemish'd, 'tis Ten to One that we can never wash out the Stain: We have begot an ill Opinion of a Man, and the Report is spread farther than that we can ever hope to recall it.

2. Consider I beseech you the great Folly of all Sin, in that it is but a doing of that which must be again undone, or else we are ruin'd. Except we Repent, our Iniquities will be our Ruin; and if we Repent, we shall, as much as in us lies, undo what we did, when we sinn'd.

Consider this when you are tempted to any Sin. This is that, which if I do, I must afterwards undo; that is, this is a vain foolish Action, it is a Performance to no purpose: Doing and undoing is the work of a Fool; and yet this is the best of the Case,

Case, if we sin, that the Evil which we do, as much as is possible, must be undone.

IV. Whoever repents, ought to confess his Sins to God. The true Penitent is so sensible of his Folly and Wickedness, so troubled for the Evil which he has done, so ashamed of, and displeased at, and humbled in himself, so affected with the Mischief which he has wrought, so set upon making amends, so desirous to be released from the Guilt, under which he lies, that he cannot but acknowledg his Faults before God, and make most hearty and humble Confessions of them.

4. Humble
Confession of
Man's Sins to
God, and beg-
ging his Mercy.

He reckons up the Multitude of his Mis-
carriages, and declares their Aggravations :
He acknowledges the Demerit of his Sins,
and therefore most humbly and seriously
deprecates the Displeasure of the Almighty,
supplicates for Mercy and Pardon, and that
he may be restored to Favour.

And when it appears to him inconsistent
with that Justice that upholds the Govern-
ment of the World, that so many and great
Wickednesses should be pardoned, that he
should escape Punishment, who has done
such irreparable Injuries both to God and
Men. He then flies to the infinite Mercy
and Goodness of God, who gave up his Son
to Death for us. Herejoices, that there is
such a Contrivance for the Reparation of
the Honour which God has lost by Sin ; and
that by this Means the Mischief threatned by
his Wickedness shall not be so inevitable as

he feared ; but that they who might have encouraged themselves in Sin by his Example, will be more forcibly restrained from it by the Sufferings of Christ. He rejoices at this, and makes it his only Ground of Hope, since this is God's own designing ; and 'tis manifestly the greatest Honour that can be done to his despised Laws, and to that Government of his, which has been opposed, and undermined by Wickedness ; that God may be just, and yet pardon Sin, and receive to Mercy every one that returns to his Duty.

So great a Sense has he of the deadly Nature, the mischievous Effects of Sin, and consequently of the just Desert of it, that nothing less than the Obedience and Sufferings of the Son of God, appears to him sufficient to expiate it, and make it consistent with that Wisdom which governs the World, to pardon it : He therefore places no Confidence in his own Prayers ; though his Confessions be never so sensible and serious, his Supplications never so earnest and importunate, yet his Hopes are, that infinite Mercy will accept him through his well-beloved Son.

That this Discourse may be better apprehended, and become more helpful to Practice, I will describe to you the Confession and Prayer of a true Penitent, of one who does indeed hate and forsake Sin. When he is in the Humblest Posture, he thus breaks out,

Lord,

Lord, I am unworthy so much as to look up to Heaven ; I am ashamed, and afraid to speak to thee ; I am, indeed, thy Creature, but I have so spoiled thy Workmanship, and defaced that thine Image in which I was made, that I am no more worthy to be called thine. Thou, indeed, hast made me, and preserved me; in thee I live, and move, and have my being : But hear, O Heavens, and be astonished, O Earth! though I depend on thee wholly, yet I have rebelled against thee ; I have resisted that Good-will by which I was made, and am continually kept.

The Confession of a true Penitent exemplified.

How unthankful have I been, and disingenuous to my greatest Benefactor, and best Friend? How unjust in denying that Obedience, which is on so many Scores due to the Sovereign Lord of all the World?

And if I could be so unnaturally impious as to break all these Bonds, yet the Things which I have done have been so apparently mischievous, or vain ; and I have neglected those Actions which are so manifestly good and profitable, that I must needs own my self not to have had the Understanding, no, nor the Nature of a Man ; so foolish have I been, and ignorant, even worse than a Beast before thee.

For I have chosen Death rather than Life ; I have forsaken mine own Peace, and followed after Destruction : I have without, and against all Reason, broken those Laws that are holy, just, and good ; and have walked in those Ways that are grievous and troublesome at present, which cause Shame and Sorrow now ; and are not only useless and vain, but very hurtful

and mischievous both to my self, and others, and do most certainly lead to Destruction.

Thus, O Lord, have I sinned against thee, in doing the Evil I should not have done, and in not doing the Good I should have done all my Days. My Commissions of Evil are more than I can remember, or rehearse before thee. O how many are the Sins of which I can accuse myself? and yet how many more, of which I took no notice, or have clean forgot?

What Impurity, what Imperfection cleaves to my best Performances? and how defective and short are the holiest Actions which I ever did? insomuch, that if thou beest extreme to mark whatever is done amiss, I cannot answer thee in Judgment for any one Action of my whole Life; but I must lie down in my Shame, and my Confusion will cover me.

And, O the Astonishment and Torment I lie under, when I consider the Mischief I have done to others! How have I enticed them into Sin by mine Example? How have I solicited them by my Perswasion? How have I betrayed them by my Falseness and Cowardise; or by my Folly, my Ignorance and Indiscreetness, have not restrain'd them from sinning? Thus either on set-purpose, or else by Carelessness and Neglect, I have engaged Men to vicious Practices, or not withheld them from it, when I might.

And what shall I say unto thee, because of these Things? Be merciful, O Lord, and pardon mine Iniquity, for it is great; have Mercy on me according to thy loving Kindness, O God, and according to the
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Multitude of thy tender Mercies, do away my Transgressions: wash me thoroughly from my Transgression, and cleanse me from my Sin.

Repair those Decays of my Nature, which have been made by my Sin; and make up whatever Damage any others have sustained by my Wickedness: And let not thy Name and Honour suffer, but glorifie thy self in and by me, who have been so instrumental to thy Dishonour.

And since thou hast manifested thy Goodwill to Sinners, in sending thy Son, that he might lay down his Life for them; good Lord, for the Love which thou hast to him, for the sake of his Obedience and Sufferings, by which thou hast vindicated the Cause of Righteousness and Vertue, against the Pleas of Sin, and the Usurpations of the Devil, and the Custom of the World; do thou accept of a repenting Sinner. And let it be sufficient, that I do humbly and heartily acknowledge, and bewail the Sins of my Life, and from my Soul detest and resolve against them.

After this Manner does the true Penitent pour out his Heart before God in Confession and Supplication for Pardon of what is past, and for Grace to subdue those evil Habits which he has contracted. Thus hearty Confession is one of those Fruits which Repentance always brings forth.

Confession, 'tis true, is too too often without Repentance; but whoever he be that repents, he cannot but be confessing and

lamenting his Sins before God, and begging Mercy. He will do this seriously and constantly, not contenting himself with a transient *God forgive me*, which may be said without either Sense of Sin, or Desire to be released from it : But as oft as he makes his Supplications to God (and that is every Day) he prays for the Pardon of his Sins, which as they are ever before him, so he confesses them to God with that Sense, and Sorrow, and Shame that becomes him.

Such as I have described, is the Penitents Confession so particular and full, so sensible and serious, so constant. It is accompanied also with most hearty fervent Desires and humble Supplications for Pardon of, and for Strength against Sin.

Besides, it is never separated from an Admiration of the Patience and Long-suffering of God towards him all the Days of his Wickedness; as also an Acknowledgment, that whatever he has suffered is less than his Iniquities deserve, and a Justifying of God, whatever Evils shall befall him, that he is Righteous in all his Dealings with him, and clear in his Judgments. And,

Lastly, he has no Comfort, but in the Infinite Mercy of God, in the most acceptable Performances of his Saviour, and in the most gracious Promises of Pardon which God has made by his Prophets of old, and last of all by his Son.

Such will be the Penitent's inward Affection, such his Deportment and Behaviour towards God.— I may add, that he is not
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satisfied with his own single Confession, and Supplication to God in private; but he does the same in publick with others: Nay, he also acknowledges his Sin to his serious discreet Friend. For he thinks he cannot be too sure of Mercy; and that there is Need in all Ways, and by all Means to implore it for such a Sinner as he is.

I do not say, that he ought to confess every ill Thing that he knows of himself, to his Priest, though he be never so imprudent or vicious; though he be, indeed, no Christian, notwithstanding his Office. For however this may promote a secular Interest, yet it does not contribute to Piety and Vertue.

But if I be sorely afflicted with the Sense of Guilt, and have dreadful Apprehensions of the Displeasure of God against me, in such Case, for the Ease and Support of my Mind, I shall do well to follow *St. James's* Rule, when I have found an honest Christian, and a faithful Friend, to confess my Faults to him, who is supposed there, that he will mutually confess his Faults to me; for so it is express'd, *Jam. 5. 16. ἐξομολογεῖσθε ἀλλήλοις* which Words do oblige every one, as well as any one to confess—and does, indeed, make every Christian anothers Confessor: It is of as large Extent as Praying one for another; and that is not the Office of the Priest or Elders of the Church only, but of every private Christian.

This that I say, That he who truly repents, will out of a Sense of the greatness of his

his Sin, and an earnest Desire of Pardon, ingage Christians, whether Priests or private Men, to pray to God, that their Sins may not be laid to their Charge. And where they can suppose, that the particular Knowledge of their Sins may make their Prayers more fervent, they will not hide them; nay, or where they want particular Direction for the Conduct of their Lives for the Future, and where the Understanding of their former Miscarriages will conduce to that, they will make them known.

Besides this, some will open their secret Follies and Miscarriages to others, that thereby they may the more abase and act Revenge on themselves, and also give Glory to the Patience and Long-suffering of God, which has not been tired out with their many Provocations.

I think I have said enough, from whence every one may understand, how Confession of our Faults to one another is a Fruit of Repentance; and how far any one is obliged to it: only let me add to those Expressions of Scripture-Penitents, which I have already used, a farther Proof, that it was *David's* Practice, *Psal. 51. v. 3, 14. I acknowledg my Transgression, my Sin is ever before me, &c. Deliver me from Blood-guiltiness, O God.*— Here is the constancy of Confession, and that particularity, *Psal. 25. v. 7. Remember not the Sins of my Youth, nor my Transgressions, &c.* He still confesses what was done many years before: and what, no doubt, he had often confessed.-- Now these *Psalms* being
publick

publick, and standing upon Record, are Confessions not only to God, but to Men that then were, and that should come after.

V. Another Fruit meet for Repentance, 5. Diligence to do all that Good which was neglected. is a doubling my Diligence to do the Good which I formerly neglected and left undone. If I be from my Heart perswaded of the excellent Goodness of a vertuous Life, as I shall sadly lament the irreparable Loss of so much time which has been spent in contrary or different Practices, in Wickedness or Vanity, so I shall now make haste to keep the Commandments.

O, saies the repenting Sinner! It is too much that I have spent my past-Life in following the Lusts of Ignorance, that I have sacrificed so many Hours, and Days, and Years, which can never be called back, to Sensuality, to Covetousness, to Ambition, to Vanity and Folly;—that I have omitted so many Opportunities of worshipping and honouring my Creator, of relieving and succouring my indigent Brother, of increasing mine own Wisdom and Goodness.

I will therefore resolve, by the help of God's Grace, henceforward to fill up the Remainder of my Life in doing as much Good as I can possibly; I will be so far from neglecting any that is offer'd, that I will seek for Opportunities of giving that Worship to the great God, which I have formerly omitted. I will both enter into my Closet,

Closet, that I may Pray to and Praise him in secret : And I will rejoice when I am summoned to the place of his Publick Worship, that I may also honour him in the Congregation.

I have, it may be, formerly, through Cowardise or Carelesness, heard the Name of God dishonour'd by Atheistic, Blasphemous, Prophane Discourses, without the least check or controule : But now, through the Grace of God assisting me, I will give my Testimony against such impudent Wickedness ; and when I think it will be effectual, I will confront such daring Prophane-ness, and bear up against all bold opposers of God and Goodness ; or (if I think that the likelier way to convince and reclaim Men from such excess of Madnes,) I will be silent, or enter into quiet and calm Discourse with them, or abandon their Company.

Again ; If in the days of my Vanity, I have been slothful ; If the one half of my time has been lost in Sleep, and the other half in doing nothing : If all my Life is past as a Dream, or a Tale that is told ; and I have done no more good than if I had been asleep ever since I was Born : I shall, if I Repent, fill up the little uncertain space that remains, with some good and useful Employment ; I shall awake from this long Lethargy, in which I have lain stupid and unactive, and shall henceforward be doubly diligent in every good Work. If I have been before, a self-neg-
lector

lester, I shall now greedily catch at every opportunity of self-Improvement ; lay hold on every advantage to be made wiser and better.

If formerly I have let slip many fair Occasions that were offered me of doing charitable and good Offices to other Men, either by Alms, by giving, or but lending Money to the Poor, or by visiting and refreshing the Sick, or releasing the Prisoners, or instructing the Ignorant, resolving the Doubtful, perswading the Obstinate, rectifying the Mistaken, counselling the Un-or Ill-advised, admonishing the Rash, confirming the Wavering, comforting the Mourner, and the like ; I shall henceforth narrowly watch every opportunity of promoting any Man's Happiness ; I shall not be slack or backward to do him all the good I can.

Thus a double proportion of Industry in doing that Good which was before omitted, is a very genuine Off-spring of Repentance ; indeed it is inseparable from it : For who can doubt but that he who is heartily grieved that he has neglected to pay his Devotions to God, to be kind and good to his Neighbour, to be wise and provident for himself, must take up firm resolutions to neglect no Season wherein he can do these things ? nay, by how much the more he has before omitted them, he looks on himself so much the more obliged to do them now.

I, says he, have stood all the day idle, even to the Eleventh Hour, it now behoves me to croud my whole Life into the little remainder of it, that one Hour which is yet to come, that so I may have finish'd my Work before the time of Retribution, that if it be possible, I may do the business of a whole Life in this little part of it.

I conclude this particular with those Expressions of *David*, P^{sal}. 119. 60. *I made haste, and delay'd not, to keep thy Commandments*, and v. 30. *I will run the way of thy Commandments*; by which, and by many other such like, he shews his earnestness and diligence in this. And with the instance of this in *St. Paul*, who because it was long before his Conversion, and because he had done much Evil, as well as left undone much Good, he therefore so afterward abounded in the Work of the Lord, that he came not behind the very chief of the Apostles; But indeed, as the Story relates, he out-strip'd them all.

6. Watchfulness against Relapses.

VI. The Man who indeed repents, will be very fearful and watchful, lest he turn again to Folly, and relapse into his former Wickedness; or, lest he be again ensnared in any kind of Sin: He has already felt the smart of it, has seen the danger which he was in, and which, by the Mercy of God he hopes he has escaped: He cannot be brought to consent to the Repetition of those Wickednesses which have already been

been so mischievous, and had well nigh destroy'd him.

It well becomes a Penitent to flee from all kinds of Sin at first sight, carefully to avoid all occasions, and to be shy of any appearances of it - As it is to be expected, that he who has been newly plucked out of the Fire or Water, should not again run into them, nor make too near approaches towards them : Brute Beasts themselves will not come near those Traps and Gins which they have narrowly escaped ; and surely, when the Penitent is solicited to commit the same Sins of which he has repented, he will reject the first motions with Abhorrency and Scorn, and say, *Non tanti emam penitere*, I will not do again what I must again undo ; I will not return to that Folly and Wickedness any more, which I have bewail'd so much ; I will not do that which I truly hate.

If he has formerly sinn'd by excessive Eating and Drinking : he will, when hereafter he comes to a Feast, put the Knife to his Throat, as the *Wife-man* does counsel ; and he will not look upon the Wine when it sparkles in the Glass. If Business engages him into that Company, in which he formerly sinn'd in this or in any other kind ; he will set a guard over himself, that he be not again entrapped, and will withdraw himself from that Temptation the first opportunity.

If his Discourse has drawn him into Sin, and multitude of Words has betray'd him
to

to Vanity or Lying ; if Debating and Disputing has excited his Passion, and engaged him in uncharitable Quarrels and Contentions ; If Ribaldry, and Obscene Foolish Talk ; If Scurrility and Reviling has been his Sin : he will thence-forward set a Watch over his Mouth, and keep the Door of his Lips that he offend not with his Tongue : He will be observant of every thing that may be an occasion of his repetition of such Sins.

Indeed it well becomes that Man who makes profession to have Repented, That he take heed unto all his ways ; that he offend not in any kind ; that he do no Iniquity : But he who returns with the Dog to his Vomit ; with the Sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the Mire ; he shews hereby the Vanity, the Insincerity of his Repentance ; and that he does but abuse others, and impose on himself, and mock God, whilst he makes a shew of hating and being sorry for having done that Sin, which again, not by surprize and incogitancy, but of choice, and most voluntarily he consents to repeat.

7. A heedful
regard to a
Man's ways.

VII. We may reckon another Fruit of Repentance to be this ; a most diligent observance of, a most heedful regard to a Man's ways. However he might in the days of his vanity and inconsideration, in the time of his Impenitency have lived carelessly, never thinking either what or why he acted : It is not so now, he cannot go on at that Rate any longer.

For

For he has got other Opinions of Sin and of Vertue than he formerly had ; he does not, as he once did, make a mock or sport of Disobedience to the Laws of Heaven ; but he looks on this as the worst Evil in it self, and as the cause of all other Evil that befalls him : Nor does he retain those low and undervaluing thoughts of Vertue which he formerly had, but is convinced of the necessity, and of the excellency of Holiness. He sees of what moment Actions are, and how much does depend upon them ; viz. no less than his own Everlasting Happiness and Misery.

Now this one Consideration, which is inseparable from Repentance, cannot but awaken him to a serious regard to what he does. For, thinks he with himself, Is my Life of such vast consequence ? shall it be with me hereafter according as my Works are here ? If I continue to do well, shall I be Happy for ever ? If I do otherwise, shall I be everlastingly Miserable ? then it most highly concerns me to look to my ways.

If I do think that Sin will bring with it a great deal of shame and sorrow, of bitter remorse and regret at present, as well as that it will be followed with endless Wo ; (And thus I do think, if I Repent) I have reason to take heed to my ways, that I offend not. And, if I be perswaded that an holy good Life, will afford me great satisfaction at present ; and also give me a sure Title to Everlasting Happiness in the

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future state (which is the belief of every true Penitent) how shall I not make it my business to practise Vertue? that is, He who thinks Vertue and Holiness the best thing in the World, and Sin and Wickedness the worst (as every Repenting Sinner does,) He will (if he act agreeably to his own Sense) not only use some Care, but make it his chief Care and Study, his principal Business to avoid Evil, and to do Good: I will a little describe how careful he will be.

He will observe himself in all that he does, not only his Words and Works which are in other Men's view; but his very Thoughts and Affections, the inward motions of his Soul shall be set before him. He will endeavour not to have any ill Thoughts and Desires, as well as not to speak any ill Words, or do any bad Actions.

For it is not an external and outside Reformation only that he intends, but a renewal in the Spirit of his Mind also. And this regard to all his Ways is no more than what at first sight appears fit and be-hoveful for the true Penitent, who is sensible of the great evil that is in all Sin whatsoever.

To be more particular; He will in the Morning bethink him what Good he shall have the opportunity of doing; and what Evil he is likely to be tempted to; and foreseeing both, he will forecast how he may do the Good, and avoid the Sin: If
he

he can escape it, he will not come under the Temptation; but if he cannot do that, he will fore-arm himself with wise Thoughts and good Resolutions, whereby he may be enabled to withstand it. For instance,

He considers whether he shall not by doing his Duty, by his lawful and necessary Business, be engaged in Company, perhaps such as are Wicked and Atheistical, (which cannot well be avoided in this our Age;) he foresees that they will be at least insinuating, if not openly avouching, their foolish and false Conceits; and by an Impudence that is surprising, (and so must pass for Wit, because it is unexpected, and mad, and bold) they will be defending their Extravagancies, they will undertake the Patronage of Vice, and expose Vertue; and whatever want of Wit, or of Reason, of Learning, or of Civility may be in their Discourse, it shall be made up with Oaths and Blasphemies, with Obscene, or Scurrilous Talk, with Noise and Laughter. If it be his hard hap that he must be engaged in such unpleasing, such dangerous Company, he thinks how he should behave himself so as to do his Duty, so as to keep himself from any way abetting, or of giving Countenance to such Wickedness; yea, so as to oppose and hinder it as much as in him lies. He will think whether it be better for him to confront such Discourses, or to divert them; or, by his not dull and cowardly, but advised and seasonable Silence to discountenance

and check them, *i. e.* He will take care before-hand so to secure himself, that he may not be made accessory to the Sins of that Company in which he is; and that he may appear in the Cause of God, and on the behalf of Goodness, against those who oppose them.

Thus we may suppose the Penitent to express his Care in this instance; and thus he will do in all others.

Every Morning he will consider what Actions he shall have the greatest inducements to do that Day; and withal, how he may avoid the Evil, and do the Good. —

Nor is this Care only with him then, but it accompanies him out of his Closet into his Shop, to his Business, to his Diversion or Company; and warns him of the Evil to which he may be tempted; or, of the Good which he may be in danger to neglect. What he could not foresee, he now observes, and as well as he can on every sudden emergency he thinks what he should do.

He minds what he does; and will say within himself, Is not this Action foolish and wicked? Is it good and vertuous? He cannot rush on it at adventures, and put it to the hazard, that is, be indifferent whether it be good or bad.

Nor is this all the Care he has of his Actions; but afterwards he looks back on them, considers whether he have the same
sense

sense of them now which he had afore, and when he did them. And if he sees upon this Review, that he has done amiss, that he has offended in the matter, or fail'd in the manner of his Actions; he will be careful to repair the decays of his Soul, which by such Miscarriages are wrought. He will reinforce himself by through Consideration and renewed Resolution, making earnest Prayer unto God that he would forgive what is past, and assist him to make better resistance against Sin; that so he may be more able and willing to do what becomes him; that when he shall again have such an other opportunity of doing good, he may be so wise as to use it; or, when he shall fall into the same Temptations to Sin, he may acquit himself better.

Such is the observance of himself and ways which the true Penitent will have; and let no Man think this a vain anxiety, a needless thoughtfulness and scrupulosity. There is indeed such a thing as that, to which weak Minds are subject through gross Ignorance and Mistake, Passion and Prejudice, Unreasonableness and Superstition: But this is of a very different nature from that which I am now speaking of.

That which I here urge, does certainly besit and become every one that professes to amend his Ways; thus to take heed to them; to observe them diligently; to keep his Heart, and that above all other keepings, is the Counsel that is given by *David*

and *Solomon*; and is taken by every good honest Man; We cannot suppose the Penitent to be real in his Profession if he be not thus solicitously careful.

8. Pressing
hard after Per-
fection.

VIII. It well becomes the true Penitent to press hard after Perfection. The Opinions which he has of Vertue and of Sin, and the great Love and Hatred with which he is affected towards them; will almost necessarily engage him to this.

How incongruous, how inconsistent would it be with the love of Vertue, above all things, to sit down satisfied in some low degrees, some little imperfect beginnings of it? Or, with what face can any one pretend to hate Sin, and yet be pleased; tho he feel himself inclined to it, be overcome by it, and act it with good liking? such Professions are confuted by his Practice.

Certainly whosoever looks on Sin as the worst of Evils, and is affected to it with such an hatred, as the apprehension of it will naturally excite; he will not rest in this, that he has cleansed his Life of all outward and open Wickedness, unless he also be cleansed from his secret Sins; he will go on to wash his Heart from impurities, as the Prophet expresses it, he will forsake his *unrighteous thoughts*, as well as his *evil ways*: He will endeavour to rid himself of all vicious Passions, of all unnatural and unreasonable Appetites, of all foolish Discoursings, and vain Imaginations; that is, of all Folly and Vice that is transacted

ed in and by the Soul it self, as well as of that which appears in our Conversation with, and carriage towards others; He will *purify himself from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit.*

For if he do indeed apprehend Sin, when it is acted, to be so dangerous and deadly an Evil, he cannot but hate and fear it, before it come to Perfection; he will surely crush the very Eggs of this Cockatrice, and will prevent the very beginnings of that which at the end will be so bitter.

Besides, he looks on Sin as pernicious to himself (tho not to the World) where it is approved and wished, as where it is practised; that if he be in his heart an Adulterer, it will as certainly ruin him as if he went to a forbidden Bed; that if he Covet other Men's Goods, 'tis as vicious in him, as if he had forced them from, or cozen'd them of them; and therefore he will be as careful to clear himself of the inward affection as of the outward action.

For he knows that there is nothing within him but what is open to the sight of God; and that the Secrets of Men's Hearts shall be judged, as well as their external Works; and that they shall be condemned for their secret and spiritual, as well as for their outward and publick Sins.

Such Considerations, (which every one who truly Repents has) will not let him be quiet, whilst he retains love or liking for any Sin.

Nay, tho he fall under Temptation by meer surprize; tho Sin stay in the very first motions, and no consent be procured; yet this is his Burden, he complains to the Father of Spirits that it is thus with him; and finding himself insufficient to prevent surprizes, or to hinder first motions to Sin, he begs the help of the Divine Grace.

And on the other hand, such is his Value and love for Vertue, that he can by no means take up either with some particular Vertues, or with the beginnings of, dispositions to, and resolutions for all Vertue. He who knows the necessity of all, can't be content with some; and he who understands the indispensable Obligations every Man is under to do good Works, will not be satisfied that he is vertuously disposed, or well resolved; or, that he has begun to do well; but is restless till his Dispositions issue in Action, till his good Resolutions go forth into good Works.

Nor is he at ease because he has done some Actions well, unless he also continue in well-doing, unless his Practice and Life be good; Nor, tho he knows he is sincerely good, is he pleas'd whilst he sees himself so far short of Perfection; so long as he feels in himself any remainders of Sin, any defects of Goodness, he is restless, and so will continue till he has attain'd the utmost Perfection of which he is capable.

Sincerity, tho it afford ground to hope that his Sins are pardoned, and so gives ease to

to his Conscience; yet it does not set bounds to his Vertues; but that satisfaction which he has already received from some good Dispositions and Purposes, and some virtuous tho imperfect Performances, engages him to go on to be, and do better: For, he says with himself, if the first Fruits cause such Pleasure, what will the Joy of the Harvest be? If I have so much Satisfaction in the beginnings and first essays of Vertue, what unspeakable Delights shall I have in its Perfection? If God give such ample Rewards to such defective Performances, what Recompence will he bestow on a more adult and compleat Goodness? And thus he is pushed on, that he can never rest till he has attain'd to the highest Pitch, the most accomplish'd Vertue of which he is capable.

This then is the guise of the true Penitent, he follows hard after Perfection, does not stint himself to any degrees, but aims to perfect Holiness in the Fear of God, to grow up into the Head in all things; nothing less will serve him than to be as good as he can be: so long as his Mind will shew him his failures, he cannot desist till he has mended all that is amiss; till his Soul has out-grown all its weaknesses, till he comes to a firm state of perfect Health.

And how should it be otherwise? since, as has been said, he is both by his own Sense and Reason, and by the Discourses of other Men, and especially by the Holy Oracles

cles of Heaven so fully assured of the transcendent Goodness of an holy Life; he has tasted so much of the Pleasures that accompany every, though imperfectly good Action; and is so well perswaded concerning the glorious Rewards which follow a vertuous Course, that he cannot but think the more the better.

For if the little imperfect Goodness which he has, does yield so much Pleasure and Peace, what thinks he, and how great will that Bliss be, which will be consequent upon a more consummate Goodness?

Add to this, that he who does hate, and is troubled for, and ashamed of his Sin, and sensible of the Mischief which it does, he thinks he can never be at distance, and safe enough from it: and therefore will himself examine narrowly, and with *David* desire God to search him, *if there be any Way of Wickedness in him, and to lead him in the Way everlasting.* Psal. 139. v. 23, 24. And Psal. 19. 12. *Cleanse thou me from my secret Faults:* Or, with *Job* 34. 32. *That which I see not, teach thou me; and if I have done Iniquity, I will do so no more.* All this is natural, and becoming the Penitent.

But how ill does it beseem him to say with himself thus; I am as good as I care to be? I am sincere, and why should I seek after any more, for that will be sufficient to save me? Therefore, Soul, take thine ease, especially since thou canst not arise to Perfection, satisfy thy self with thy Sincerity, and do thus the rather, since either
thine

thine Attempts after more Holiness, or thine attaining to it, may be both pernicious to thee— And therefore *Solomon* has wisely cautioned, Not to be *over-righteous*: For, saies he, *Why shouldst thou die before thy Time?* implying, That this is the Way to Death.

Not now to shew the ill Reasoning of this Discourse; it is certainly very unsutable to a repenting Sinner to set bounds to his Change, and say, Thus far I will reform, and no farther. Nay, how is it possible? Where will he stop? For if he hate all Sin, how can he but endeavour to rid himself of all Sin?

If it be answered, That he will stay at Sincerity. To this I answer,

1. If by Sincerity be meant Heartiness (as that Word seems to import, and is in common use opposed to Hypocrisie) then the Sense is, that so soon as a Man finds himself generally affected towards Goodness, or resolved against Sin, he will rest satisfied in this; not considering, that few Men but one Time or other, have their Hearts set against Sin in general, and some Sins in particular, and are disposed towards Vertue, and it may be, resolved on it.

But what Degree of our Affection, how much of the Heart is required to denominate a Man sincere, can no Way be known better than by the Effects; and of all the Effects that are wrought by it, none does more surely evince it, than going on toward Perfection.

No Sincerity without continual Endeavours after Perfection.

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For if a Man be hearty in his Endeavours to amend his Life, he will do better than he has done : And if he do so, this will leave a Disposition behind it still to do the same ; and this Exercise will necessarily improve him, that by doing some Good, he is inclined to do more ; and the more Good he does, the more he is disposed to do, and the more he will do. For a sincere Endeavour of Amendment is a continual Endeavour to be as good as we can, that is, still to grow better.

From hence it appears, that Sincerity does imply in the very Notion of it, a Tendency towards Perfection at least, that this is inseparable from that Heartiness or Sincerity, which does denominate a Man a real Penitent.

2. How is it possible that he should be heartily perswaded of the Evil of all Sin, and that he hates it, who yet does not constantly endeavour to purifie himself from all Sin ? Or, that he should think well of, and love all Vertue, who yet does not follow after all Vertue ? And if he does aim at it, he is then endeavouring after Perfection.

So that whoever pretends to stay at Sincerity, he talks ignorantly ; he speaks of that which cannot be. For Sincerity it self signifies a Man in Motion and Exercise, and so in a Tendency towards the Perfection of that Vertue which he now practises.

3. Unless he do go forward, though he were once sincere, he cannot continue long so. For that inward Affection cannot be continued without sutable Exercise, and without those

those Effects which are conformable to it.

If I aim at Perfection, I shall go on to reform, and by this Means I shall become more earnest and hearty : whereas if I design to be no better than I am, I shall not actuate my Habit, nor intend my Affection, but lose the good Disposition which I have, which as it is increased by sutable Practice, so 'tis lessen'd and lost for want of it.

This excursion may suffice for Removal of that Objection, that a true Penitent may stick at Sincerity : To go on to Perfection, is as inseparable from true Repentance, as any Thing which I have named, and does as well become the Penitent.

To conclude then this Particular : Let none say, Soul, take thy Rest, thou art good enough. Let us not so please and applaud our selves in the Goodness which we may have attained above many other Men ; saying as the Pharisee, *God, I thank thee, &c.* I do thus and thus ; I pray, read Scripture, frequent the Church ; I am no prophane Swearer, no Drunkard, nor Adulterer. — Let us not be contented that we are better than we once were ; -- *but forgetting the Things that are behind, let us press forward towards the Mark for the Prize.* Let us say with St. Paul, *We are not yet perfect, but we follow after,* if that we may apprehend *that for which we are apprehended of Christ Jesus.* Phil. 3. 12.

The last Fruits of Repentance which I shall mention, relate to our Affection, and Deportment towards other Men. I shall instance in Three.

9. ¹Due Affection and Deportment towards other Men : As,

1. A

1. Declining
the Society of
the bad, and
associating
most willingly
with the good.

1. A Dislike and utter Abhorrence of the vicious sinful Practices of the Wicked, and consequently an Unwillingness to be in their Company ; and on the contrary, a Delight in the Life and Temper of good Men, --- and most willingly associating with them.

It is oft observ'd, that Men dislike those Vices in others, which yet they are pleased with in themselves : But whosoever does, indeed, hate Sin with the Hatred of Repentance, he dislikes it both in himself and others ; and he that is heartily displeased with it in himself, cannot like it in other Men : He hates all Sin whatsoever , and wheresoever he sees it.

Although he have otherwise never so great a Love, Value, or Honour for any Man's Person, yet this cannot reconcile him to a good liking of his vicious and sinful Practices : he rather hates them so much the more, in that he is sensible how they will corrupt and destroy all that Excellency with which they are : We despise and undervalue a Fly every where, but we abominate it in a Box of precious Ointment, because it will corrupt , and cause it to stink.

I do not say, That the Penitent will undervalue or dislike all that Good, which is too often found with vicious Practices, and corrupt Discourses. — He may love the Wit, and the Humour, the Freedom, and Pleasantness, the Gentleness and Civility, which Debauchees may have in their Conversation. But this, notwithstanding, if their talk be pro-

prophane and atheistical, if obscene and filthy, if reviling and scurrilous, if it be Blasphemy against God and Goodness; or Slander and Abuse of his Neighbour; or in any Kind whatever, vicious: he will, in all decent Ways he can, shun such Company; and rather chuse to want the Wit and Mirth, than to have the Sin and Folly of it.

The Love he has to the Name and Honour of God is such, that he cannot endure to hear it profanely prostituted to vouch Lies, to authorize Rashness and Folly, and Non-sense.

He can take no Pleasure in that Company where he sees the holy and eternal Laws of Heaven openly and audaciously violated; where Temperance and Modesty, Religion towards God, and Good-will to Men; where wise, and manly, and useful Discourse are shut out.

And how is it possible that he should be pleased, when, it may be, what he sees in other Men, now calls to Mind his own former Practice, and so unskins the Wound, that it bleeds afresh? He remembers how impiously, or how uncharitably, or foolishly himself has sometimes talked, and this causes a new Shame and Sorrow.

Besides, he cannot but be sorely troubled to think of the Miseries which these Men are bringing on themselves: They are but filling up the Measure of their Sins.--- And alas! before much Time pass, the Vengeance of God, whom these Men thus despise and railly, will smoke against them, and consume

sume them. — And this can be no pleasant Prospect, which the Vices and Follies of all Company gives the good Man. But on this Account also his righteous Soul must be vexed with their corrupt Manners, because he sees that these are but plucking up the Flood-gates, and letting in all the terrible Woes which are denounced by God, and fear'd by the Wicked themselves.

Thus the Unpleasantness of it makes the good Man avoid the Company of the Wicked. Farther, he will do this, because he is no Way further'd in, but rather hindered from the Design at which he aims. His Business is to be, and to do good, which will be very much cross'd by keeping bad Company; for there Vertue will be defam'd openly, or silyly disparaged, and Vice will be set off with all Advantage.

Besides, some of these Factors for Hell will lay Snares to catch the Unwary: so that it must be very dangerous for them, if they be of unsteady Resolutions, or be not confirm'd by long Practice, to accompany with practis'd and resolved Sinners. It is ten to one but they will be set back in their Way, that they will be enticed by Sinners, at least, that their Reason will be baffled; that some ready Wit shall talk more acceptably, than one of more deeper and more considered Thoughts: And that the Company will give the Cause to him that talks most dextrously, confidently and freely, and most agreeably to their own Humour and Design. And what a mischievous Effect
may

may this have upon the unsettled doubtful Mind? Who knows but he may give up the Cause which he was not able to manage, and become a Profelyte?

After all this, I deny not, but a wise Man confirm'd in Goodness, may make a very good Use of ill Company whenever he falls into it: For by his observing the Stratagems of Sin, and the Snares of the Devil, whereby evil Men are caught, he learns the Methods whereby they are to be recovered; by his knowing the Occasions and Causes of their Diseases, he becomes skilful to cure them.

But yet he cannot but be very cautious and circumspect, and converse with them in great Fear: For he knows, that whosoever touches Pitch, shall be defiled with it. And he feels himself many times to come worse out of bad Company. And therefore if he see himself hindred from doing that Good, from living that Life which he has resolved upon, he will presently free himself from that Incumbrance, and cast off that Weight, saying with *David*, *Depart from me, ye Wicked, for I will keep the Commandments of my God*; i. e. my Designs and yours are quite contrary; and to converse with you, will but stop me in the Way in which I am going.

This is the Sense of every one that is in good earnest on the Reformation of his Life. This is one part of his Affection and Deportment to the Wicked. But to the good

and vertuous his Carriage is quite different; on these he sets a high Value, accounting them *the excellent of the Earth*, and takes great Pleasure in their Converse.

Such as these he sees are of the same Spirit and Temper with himself, carrying on the same Designs, and walking in the same Ways: And how can it be, that they who all intend one and the same Thing, and who are so like to one another, should not love each other?

And then the Advantage and Benefit which they receive by the Conversation of good Men, makes them value and desire it. They always find themselves go wiser and better out of such Company, than they came into it. Their Discourse, their Practice, their very Meen and Carriage is instructive and engaging.

They see by the Conversation of good Men, at once what they should do, and what they do not; they understand their own Defects and Shortnesses, and are ashamed to be left so far behind in the Ways of Vertue.

They are also encouraged by the Attainments of others, who are of like Passions and Infirmities with themselves, to strive after the same Perfections of Vertue, and receive Direction what Course they may take to reach it.

One Way or other they are better'd by good Company; either by their wise Discourse, or friendly Reproof, or good

Ex-

Exhortation, or their vertuous Example, and discreet Behaviour: By these they improve their own Understandings, learn to regulate their Passions, to guide and order their Speech, to reform their Life: And thus feeling themselves set forward in their Way to Perfection and Happiness by such Converse; they cannot but esteem and love it, and take pleasure in it; as *David* saies, *Psalm. 16.* All their Delight is in God's Saints, *his holy Ones that are in the Earth;* i. e. *those who excel in Vertue.*

And this is so sure an Effect of, and so inseparable from Men's Conversion from Sin to God, that *St. John* makes it the Sign of spiritual Life, *1 John 3. 16.* *By this, saies he, we know that we are pass'd from Death to Life, because we love the Brethren.--* Nay, and our Saviour saies, *By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another: John 13. 35.* From these Texts it appears, that taking pleasure in the good Lives of vertuous Men, is an inseparable Property of real Goodness, and an Effect and Indication of true Life, and consequently a Fruit meet for Repentance.

2. Another Fruit of it, relating to our Affection and Carriage to other Men, is a zealous Endeavour to preserve other Men from, and to rescue them out of a sinful State and Practice.

2 Zeal to re-
serve others
from, and to
rescue them
out of a sinful
State.

The true Penitent has a lively Sense of the Misery and Danger in which he was, when he lived in Sin: Therefore he can-

not but apprehend and compassionate the woful Condition of all wicked Men; he sees them going in the Ways that directly lead to Destruction: He beholds them on the very Precipice, throwing themselves headlong into everlasting Wo, while yet so foolish are they for the most part, they never think of what they are doing: But he sees, and sadly bewails their sad Case, to this Effect;

I my self was in the same Condition with these poor Men, as great a Sinner as, it may be, I know any, and in as desperate Danger; and now that I am escaped through the Mercies of God, shall I not shew Mercy to other Men, and do what in me lies to save them, as God of his unspeakable Goodness has saved me?

Surely if he have any Sense of the Wretchedness of a sinful State, and of the dreadful Evils consequent upon it, he cannot but commiserate all those that are in it. And if he have any Resentment of the wonderful Love of God to him, any grateful Remembrance of, any Joy in his own Deliverance, he will be constrain'd to make others Partakers of the same Blessedness with himself.

He will betake himself to Prayer, and intercede with God on their behalf, that that Mercy which has deliver'd him from the State of Sin, may be extended unto all them that are in it.

Nor will he only pray for them, but likewise follow his Prayers with Endeavours, and do what he can for their Rescue : --- Where he has Opportunity, and where he himself thinks it will be effectual, he will advise, reprove, exhort, and take all likely Ways, either to restrain, or restore them from Sin.

If he have Authority over any, as a Father has over his Children, as a Master over his Servants, a Prince over his Subjects, a Magistrate, a legal Officer over the Commonalty ; he will not fail to exercise that, if by it he can withhold them, over whom he is set, from sinning.

In short : He will use the best Methods, and take all Opportunities to prevent other Men's falling into Sin, or to recover them out of the Snare of the Devil ; he will be charitable towards them, and zealous to bring them into that good State in which he is.

For though (as was observed under the former Particular) he have an utter Abhorrence of the vicious Practices of wicked Men, and so can take no Pleasure in their Company : Yet this hinders not, but that he has great Good-will, and is forward to do them all good Offices, and consequently this (which is the best, and most necessary of all others) to save them from their Sins.

Thus, though we be not pleased with the Wounds or Bruises of a Man, though

we care not to hear the Cries which Pain extorts, nor to see such loathsome Spectacles as Men are made by some Distempers; yet if we know of a Medicine that is likely to cure them, we shall not in such Case fail to administer it. Our loathing the Disease and its Effects, does not exclude our Charity to the diseased Person: No more inconsistent is the Hatred and Abhorrence of Vice with our Good-will to the vicious.

3. Patience and Gentleness in our Dealing with others.

3. The last of those Fruits of Repentance which respect our Disposition and Carriage to other Men, is Patience and Long-suffering, Meekness and Gentleness in our Dealings with them.

This at first Sight appears the almost necessary Effect of true Repentance. For the real Penitent retains a lively Sense of the heinous Offences which himself has committed against the Divine Majesty, and of the Days without Number that the great God bore with his corrupt Manners, and spared him, notwithstanding his repeated Provocations.

He considers how accommodate and proper those Methods were, by which God attempted his Recovery: And how often he by his Perverseness rendered them ineffectual; yet such was the Divine Patience, that it did not give him over; it was unwearied and desisted not, till the Design of Mercy was accomplished on him; *i. e.* till he was reclaimed; and now that he is reclaimed he has good Hopes that his Sins are pardoned,
and

and that he is in an excellent State, which he feels in part.

Now he that has such Thoughts as these, as he will praise and adore the Long-suffering of God towards himself, so he will endeavour to imitate it himself, and be to other Men as God has been to him.

So that if his Brother offend against him, tho it be seventy seven Times, yet if he turn and acknowledge his Offence, he will forgive him. And though that Injury has been very great, yet he considers, it is not to be compared with the Wrong which he has done to God, who has notwithstanding pardoned him upon his Repentance ; therefore he cannot harbour revengeful Thoughts against his offending Brother. But if Anger begin to rise above its Banks, he presently allwages it with this Consideration.

I deserved infinitely worse of the glorious God, than 'tis possible for any Man to do of me, --- and yet behold he bore with me a long time, and at last upon my Repentance he forgave me. And if a Debt of ten thousand Talents be remitted to me by the great Lord of all, how can I take my Fellow-Servant by the Throat, and smite him, and cast him into Prison for an hundred Pence? Do I believe that I was delivered from Hell, to which I was liable because of my Sin against God? How then can I deliver up my offending Brother to the Rigour of the Law, when, it may be, what I have been damaged by him was not

through his Fault, but his Misfortune? God has relaxed his most righteous Law, shall I exact the utmost Severity of perhaps an unequal Law? God has remitted of his unquestionable Right, shall I not forgo that, which probably out of Mistake is said to be my Right?

How can I either believe that God has pardoned me, or hope that he will, if I be not like-minded, and forgive my repenting Brother? Especially since our Saviour has so plainly declared, that what Measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again: And that if we from our Hearts forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will our heavenly Father forgive us.

Besides, the true Penitent is not only merciful, but mild and gentle; he is patient, and hopes still for the Offenders Amendment: This he heartily endeavours, and zealously promotes.

Now if it so happen, that he has to do with a froward and perverse Sinner, one that is either dull and sottish, or strangely obstinate, or supinely careless and slothful, or most resolvedly wicked, insomuch that all the Means that are used for his Amendment, prove succesless and vain; yet the good Man will not give over.

For he considers how various Ways God took with him, how often he was by the sacred Oracles, by instructing and admonishing Providences, by friendly and fatherly Exhortations of God's Ministers, and good Men,

Men, by the Voice of his own Conscience, by the secret Whispers of the blessed Spirit, warned and called upon : and yet how long he was deaf to, and resisted the Counsel of God, but at last (the Goodness of God still waiting for his Amendment) he was reclaimed. And why may he not hope for the same in his Brothers Case, which he has seen in his own ? Thus he argues :

Did both God and Men bear with me ? I ought then to be patient with my Brother. Was the Divine Wisdom not only unwearied, but also gentle, and tender, and condescending to me ? I will be so to my froward Brother--- I will consider the Disadvantages of his Temper and Constitution, his natural Capacities, his Education, ill Company, and Custom to which he has been used : --- I will take the best and likeliest Way to recover him, if he be in a State of Sin, or to prevent his falling into it. I will reason calmly, I will discourse vehemently with him, I will by my Anger, or by my Sorrow, or with, or without any other Passion endeavour to reduce him.---

God has dealt all Ways with me, and the End is very good ; Why therefore should I be impatient and fretful, peevish and unquiet, and tired, because some one Method which I have used with a vicious Child or Servant, has been unsuccessful ? Or, because I have stayed some time and seen

seen no Fruit of my Endeavours? I will not yet give over, but stay longer, and try more, and other Methods.

That all these Fruits which we have reckoned up, are meet for Repentance, does, I believe, sufficiently appear by what has been said.— We might farther consider, for our fuller Satisfaction, How incongruous to, how inconsistent with it, would be the contrary Fruits.

Would any Man look on his Repentance otherwise than as a vain and hypocritical Pretence, where there is no hearty Sorrow, nor Shame, no Self-abhorrence, nor Abasement for the Sins which he has committed? No humble Confession of them to God, nor Deprecation of the Punishment due to them; no earnest Supplication for Pardon and Freedom from them? Or, how shall he be said to turn from his Evil, who does not heartily endeavour to undo it? Or, how can he be thought to set the highest Esteem on Vertue, and to be, indeed, sorry at Heart, that he has so long neglected it, who yet is not forward and diligent to do the Good which he formerly omitted? Or, does not he vainly pretend to repent of those Sins, which he is not careful to avoid? Can that be thought a true Repentance, which does not make the Penitent take heed to his Ways? Or will suffer him to sit down satisfied, tho he be far short of Perfection? Lastly, what a Mockery is it
to

to say, I repent of those Sins, with which I am pleased, or not displeased in other Men? Or, that I have a great Affection for that Vertue, in which I take no Pleasure when I see it in the Life and Temper of good Men? Can we have such Apprehensions of Sin, and yet not endeavour to save Men from it? Lastly, who can think of the Divine Mercy and Patience, and be impatient and uncharitable?

to say I am of the same with which
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 it is who can think of the Divine Mercy
 and Justice, and not be instant and re-
 pentant.

A
DISCOURSE
OF
Seeking first
THE
Kingdom of God.

By HEZEKIAH BURTON, D. D.



L O N D O N :

Printed for *Richard Chiswell*, at the *Rose* and
Crown in *St. Paul's Church-yard*, 1684.

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A
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OF
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THE
Kingdom of God.

S. Matth. ch. 6. v. 33. *But seek ye first
the Kingdom of God, and his Righte-
ousness.*

WHosoever would bring him-
self under good Conduct,
and order his Conversation
aright, must take good heed
what he makes his chief Care and Study,
his principal Aim and main Business.

*Introduction;
shewing the
care every Man
ought to have
of his chief
End.*

For, if that which he most values, and on
which he lays out his greatest Industry, be
well

well chosen, it will have an admirable influence on his whole Life.

It will determine his Affections to their true and proper Objects; it will moderate them to a just proportion; it will direct and regulate his actions, and shew him what and when, and how much or little is to be done by him.

It will not only direct, but assist and strengthen him to walk in that way to which it directs him. For, that affection which prevails, which is supreme in the Soul, does by a natural efficacy sway and rule the rest. All the inferiour and lesser passions will be determined by that which is most vigorous and vehement; and such is that whose Object is our principal and last End.

It is therefore of vast consequence that this End be fixed, that we be resolved in it: And it is of no less consequence and importance that we fix rightly, that we judge truly, and make a wise choice; where a Man fails in either of these, he cannot but fall into innumerable miscarriages in his Life.

If a Man have no one fixed end, but sometimes designs this, and sometimes that; to day he is for one thing, to morrow for another; now he is for the good state of his Soul, anon he is most busy to secure the health and welfare of his Body; another time he is in the pursuit of Riches and Fame, or Power: so that in Truth he lives like a Distracted Man; he is one while going
one

one way, another the contrary; he is not the same to day he was yesterday; he is a Philosopher, a Courtier, a Man of Pleasure, a Servant of Riches, a Slave of Honour, a Friend, an Enemy; a good and a bad Man at differing times; he is every thing and nothing; none can be sure of him, for he is not certain and fixed in himself.

The Wind is not so unconstant as this Man who has no one fixed end; he varies with the Weather, with his Bodily temper, according to the humour of the Company he keeps; as these or any other causes make several things appear pleasing to him, he is carried after this or that; if he hear a good passionate commendation of Vertue, he is in love with that; and if he chance to fall amongst those who with wit and pleasantness will set off Vice, he is presently for that.

There is no hold to be taken of him, so mutable is he, and his Life so various and multiform, that it can be of no one denomination; but as *Tully* has described Man, he is indeed *animal multiplex*.

This Man has either many Designs or none; and so is either in pursuit of nothing, or of many things with the same vigour, which is to no purpose; for, he is so diverted by this multiplicity of last Ends, that he attains nothing.

The Poet has taken notice of this miscarriage, and gives a true representation of those that aim at nothing fixedly, and

yet like Children are moved by almost every thing that comes before them.

*Est aliquid quo tendis, & in quod dirigis arcum?
An passim sequeris corvos testâque lutoque
Securus quo pes ferat, atque extempore vivis?*

That is,

Hast thou any Mark at which thou shootest, at which thou directest the Actions of thy Life? or, dost thou like foolish Boys, who follow the Birds hither and thither; and when they are on the Wing, throw after them Stones or Shells, and art wholly careless whither thy Feet carry thee, let it be where it will, living extempore, without any premeditation or fore-laid Design?

Thus various and multiform, vain, and to no purpose is the Life of that Man, who has either none, or not the same, has no one fixed end; but as the Psalmist expresses it, he says, *Who will shew us any Good?* he's indifferent to it, be it what it will, 'tis all alike to him, *any good*.

One may as soon and as certainly regulate the Winds, which none knows whence they come, nor whither they go; as order such a Life, which having no one constant End, is liable to be tossed to and fro by a Thousand unseen and contrary Accidents.

The sum is; He that has no end at which he aims, as he designs nothing, so he will atchieve nothing; and he that proposes to himself many Ends by turns, he so divides him-

himself betwixt many Things, that he does not bestow that Pains which is necessary for the attaining any one; he makes various Essays, but finishes no one Work. He is like the Traveller that will not keep his Way, but ranges into other Paths, and so comes as far backward to Morrow, as he went forward to Day.

This may suffice to shew the great Inconveniences that arise from having none, or no one Design in Life.— Nor are those fewer, which come from an ill, and unwise Choice of our End.

For, if we make that our End, which indeed is not, if we mistake, and intend foolishly, we then put all out of Order; our whole Life is nothing but Confusion; All our Actions are, as it were, turned topsy-turvy, nothing can be regular or orderly in our whole Course: We have put things out of their proper Places, and they are in a perpetual Hurly-Burly.

It may be, a Man is in Pursuit of somewhat that is Evil, from which he should flee, and so he is following his own Destruction instead of his Happiness. Or, he sets the Means in the Place of the End; a most preposterous Course, and such as must bring Disorder and Confusion into his whole Life: his Affections are inordinate, and therefore all those Actions, of which they are the Springs, cannot but be disorderly.

He that makes the Means his End, and uses that which is his true End but as a

C c 2

Means,

Means, is in Danger of falling into as great Wickedness and Mischief, as are incident to human Nature. For, as he who instead of Good, intends Evil, is in the high Road to ruin himself, and do Mischief to the World; so he that sets up the Means for the End, and turns the End into a Means, goes in the Path that will surely lead to the same.

As the other is open and notorious Wickedness, so this is one of the Ways of Hypocrisie. And Hypocrisie is as certainly mischievous, as bare-fac'd Impiety. Nay, many times Men, by wearing a Mask of Piety, do those Evils, which, if they would appear as they are, they would never do.

How often does the Form of Godliness, the Shew of Religion become a most powerful Engine to mount an ambitious Man to that unjust Height, which he could never have risen to in any other way?

And how do Men cheat themselves as well as others, by making Religion truckle to their worldly Interests? Were it not for this, 'tis probable, that their Consciences would arrest them for their wicked Practice. But now, though they give Alms, or worship God only to serve a turn, yet they think themselves religious and good Men, and so take no Care to reform themselves.

There is also another Miscarriage in this Matter, and that is, when Men aim only at some small Part of their End instead of the whole. As if they should look upon

Know-

Knowledge as containing the whole of Man, which is but one of those Perfections of which his good State does consist. Whosoever is in this Mistake, will lay himself out upon this only; and his sole Care will be to know. The like Mistake, it would be, if a Man should cut himself off from God and the World, so as to design nothing besides his own Welfare, without regard to the Glory of God, or the Good of others; whereas all these together do but make up the whole End of Man.

From the Discourse it appears, that there are five grand Miscarriages which are incident to Men in respect of the End, or that which they should principally intend.

I. To have no End, to live without Design: this is the State of a meer Idiot, the worst of Fools: this is to be as stupid and sottish as Man can be, 'tis to sink below Man.

The common Miscarriages of this, reduced to five Heads.

For why should he be thought worthy of the Name of Man, who acts for no Reason, and lives to no Purpose, who aims at no End? Such a one is unmann'd, is become a Beast. The Effect of this sottish Mistake must be to make him unactive and idle, and the Consequent of that must be Ruine.

For he that designs nothing, will do nothing; and he that does nothing, takes the ready Course to be nothing: For his Being is in vain: And as God never made any Thing in vain, so neither will he continue that which is so.

II. To have no one fixed End. Our Nature seems to be raised above Brutes in this, That we can do all our Works with Respect to an End; whereas they seem not to understand why they do this, or that, or a thousand Things. Or, if there appear to be some obscure Perception of the immediate Effect of some Action, yet they fall short of that clear and explicate Designation of the End, which we have.

In this then we are superior to Brutes. But according as we propound to our selves not only the Ends of particular Actions, but also the Universal one of our whole Lives; and according as we are more or less fixed on; and determined to this one Design, the more constant and steady that is, the greater is our Perfection. And, as in the former Particular we are set above Brutes; so by this we may excel most Men. This is one, and a principal one of those Things, that make the Difference betwixt the wiser and the weaker, the virtuous and the vicious.

I do not say, but Men may be foolish, tho they have some one Thing in their Eye for which they live; and though they be constant in the Pursuit of it. But as they may be weak and vicious with this, so they cannot be wise and good without it.

To have many and various Designs without Subordination to one another, and to one ultimately, will necessarily distract and disquiet the Soul, and fill the Life with Irregularities and Disorders; and hinder that

Pro-

prosecution of any one End which is needful to the attaining it, as I have already said.

And the same Mischief will arise from an unconstant, unsteady Designation of one End. That Traveller who is one Day bent upon going to such a Place, and the next Day is off from that, not caring whether he goes or not, will scarce come to the End of his Journey : But if he be as much against it one Day, as he was for it another, he will never either undertake or perform it.

We read, 2 Tim. 3. 6, 7. of *Women laden with Sins, and led away with divers Lusts.* And what follows ? *They were ever learning, but never came to the Knowledge of the Truth;* that is, they sometimes desired to know the Truth, but they had also divers other Desires which they would gratifie; and this hindred them, that they could never attain that Knowledg which they sought after. One while they were for *knowing the Truth*, another they were not, but for fulfilling their Lusts; and so they were *ever learning, &c.*

III. To design that which is evil, is a most fatal Miscarriage. To love Evil in any Degree, is bad enough, but in the greatest, is pernicious : And yet thus Men love it, that make it their End.

But is this possible, can any one love Evil, and hate Good ? I answer ; They cannot wittingly : They may call Good, Evil ; and

so may love that, which in some respect or other seems Good, but is really evil. Thus Men may think they do God good Service, when they put such to Death, whom they look on as wicked Miscreants, who are really good and holy Persons.

Whosoever makes this his Business, designs Evil: As he who aims at nothing so much as the Gratifications of his sensual Appetites in all forbidden Instances.

He that lives to such Purposes as these, that is intent on dishonouring God, on opposing God's Ends, resisting his Government in the World; that makes it his aim to do Mischief to Men, to make them more miserable, or but less happy; Or, that goes on in the Ways that lead to his own Death and Ruin: this Man designs Evil.

And what can be more pernicious to him, than such a Mistake and Miscarriage as this? For 'tis all one as if the Traveller should set his Face toward the North, when he should be travelling toward the South; he travels backward, and farther off from his Journey's End.

This foolish Choice of an evil End will have a most malign Influence on our whole Life, and make every Action sinful. It will direct us to chuse evil Means; or if they were good of themselves, they are infected, and by their Relation to this End, become Evil.

IV. Another dangerous, though common Miscarriage, is, to aim at some of the Means, and to make that our End which is only some-

something in order to it. Thus they miscarry, who level all their Thoughts, Care, and Industry to be rich; whose greatest Study is to gratifie their bodily Appetites, whose whole Business is to be advanced to high Power, or to be in great Vogue and Reputation. All which are Means manifestly subservient, and leading to some farther End.

Now to intend these, or other mean Goods ultimately, to make them final, is to invert the Order of Nature, and to abuse Things, and our selves too.

That which makes this Miscarriage still worse, is, when we make the End a Means: As when we make Justice and Religion to minister to Wealth and Honour, &c. This, as it shews great Disorder in the Soul; so it fills the Life with miserable Confusions, and horrible Irregularities.

V. The last Miscarriage I have pointed at, is aiming at less than our End, at a Piece of our Happiness for the whole, our own single Happiness, never regarding what is honourable to God, or beneficial to our Fellow-creatures.

The Effect of this will be the lessening and contracting our Faculties, in that we do not allow them their full Scope, and due Latitude to exercise them about their adequate Objects: We limit and restrain, and by that Means cramp and weaken them: so every one does, who aims not at his End in its largest Extent.

From

From what we have hitherto discoursed, we cannot but apprehend the great Benefit, indeed the absolute Necessity of taking especial care of our principal Desires, and most leading Affections, that they be determin'd to some one Thing, and be fixed on that. And it behoves us to look narrowly to that which we make the Object of them; that on which our chief Study, Care and Pains is laid out; that to which we refer ultimately all that we do, and at which we aim in the whole Course of our Life.

The Sum of
what Nature
directs in this.

Now Nature directs us thus far. 1. That which we make our chief End and Object of all our Study and Industry, must be not only good, but the best and chief Good. 2. That it must be one, or if many, yet in a Subordination, which makes them one. 3. That our Endeavours after it may have Influence and Efficacy to obtain it. 4. That it be of so large Extent as to be commensurate to human Nature, and an adequate Object of all the Powers with which we are endued, that they may be exercised in such manner as will tend to, and suite with their highest Exaltation and greatest Perfection.

To what I have said to shew the Necessity of the well-placing our chief Affections, let me superadd the Testimony which common People give to this.

For I account it a very considerable Argument of not only the Truth and Evidence, but also of the Usefulness and Necessity of any Matter, when both the Learned and the Ignorant, the more and the less consider:

sidering Part of Mankind agree in it. For, as it is in the natural World, Things the more common they are, the more valuable and necessary : The Sun and Stars, the Air, and Earth, and Water are common to all Men ; and they are the most necessary, and best Things in order to our Animal Life. So I account it in the Moral World. Those Truths which are most useful and excellent, are also most obvious and intelligible. And if I observe any that are known, or very knowable by all, I make great Account of, and lay mighty Strefs on them ; whereas I set little Value on those Curiosities and Subtilities, which are too fine for common Apprehensions.

Now as to the Matter in hand, the choice of that End at which we ought to direct our Actions, or (which is all one) the Object of our chief Care and Study. The Commonalty has not only observed, but been very exact in their Observations of this, as appears from common Speech : For are not such as these, ordinary and usual Expressions with even the Vulgar? *Viz.* A Man of no Design, of many Designs, of impossible, or impracticable Designs, of uncertain, unsteady Designs, of evil Designs, of mean, little, low Designs, &c.

The Suffrage
of the Vulgar.

Does not every one understand the Sense of all these Phrases? And are they not used as disparaging Characters of those to whom they are given?

On the contrary; we commend Men when we say, their Designs are good ; they have great

great and large Aims; that they intend bravely, that is, something that is great, and good, and difficult; their Ends are futable, probable; they are fixed and steady, diligent and careful in prosecution of their End.—By such like Forms of Speech in common use we express our Esteem of Men.

Thus the common People, as well as the more considering sort of Mankind, distinguish of Men by their Ends: so that if we will be concluded either by rational Discourse, or vulgar Understanding, and common Observation, we must think it a Matter of vast Importance, to have a well-chosen End of our Life, to have our chief Care and Study placed in something that is good and futable, worthy of our Pains, and attainable; and that we be continually busied about this very Thing, directing all our Actions unto it.

Against this Discourse may be objected that, which first we find said by some Philosophers, *viz.* That we are not to consult about the End, but only about the Means. 2ly. That it is needless and vain to take such Care in the Choice of our End, because we shall by natural Inclination be directed to it, and attain it, as other Things do, without understanding it; we shall both prosecute and reach it, whether we know and chuse it or not. 3ly. If this had been so necessary, surely the Scriptures would have been more express in requiring us in this Matter, than it is.

To

To these Objections, I answer

Three Objections against this Care, answered.

To the first. I suppose their Meaning is, That a Man ought to be determined about his End, not fluctuating and unresolved, as they use to be in Matters about which they consult. But this does not imply, that they should use no Consideration and Care before they resolve. On the contrary, it is evidently a Matter of vast Consequence, that they deliberate and consult most of all about their End. For on our fixing a right End, depends the wise Choice of Means. If we do not design well, we necessarily miscarry in all that we do.

If therefore the Philosopher mean, that we can do nothing well and wisely, nothing like Men, unless it be for some End : that we do no Action in the Use of our Understanding, but 'tis supposed to our undertaking it, that we have some End in it. To this I agree : But it cannot be argued hence, that we are not very carefully to consult about the End of our Lives, and of particular Actions as well as the whole Course of them. This will farther appear in our Answer to the second Objection.

To the second Objection I say, first, That though Nature does incline us to our End, and by that we have some Intimations of what it is we aim at, some obscure Sense of it, which will direct us in our Prosecution. Or, though we may be carried towards it with the same natural *Impetus* which is observable in other Beings, while we have no Perception of it : yet the better we understand

stand our End, and the more rational and exprefs Choice we make of it, the more do we corroborate and perfect what is only begun in Nature; so as we may hope more certainly to obtain that which we do more clearly know, and more distinctly chuse.

But, secondly; I do not see how we shall ever attain our End without explicate Knowledge and Choice of it. For though Things not endued with Understanding and Liberty, do come to their Ends without Knowledge, &c. yet it follows not, that therefore Man, to whom these are essential, shall do so too. On the contrary, as all other Beings attain their Ends by the Use of those Faculties which are natural to them; so also shall Man in the use of his Reason and Liberty, these being the principal Faculties of that which is most truly human Nature.

The Winds blow, the Waters flow; Fire burns without any Sense of the Effects or Ends of their Motions.—Nay, brute Animals do many Actions without perceiving so much as the immediate End of them; but they never so comprehend them as to discern what is the one End at which they all aim. This is Man's peculiar, he only can foresee the remote Consequences and last Issue of all he does, and what that is at which all his Actions terminate.

Now Man being endued with such a Foresight, and an universalizing Faculty, it is requisite that he exercise them, that he may attain his End, which can never be had,
bu

but in, and by the Use of his natural Faculties.

To the third I reply, 1st. That many Things are supposed by the Scripture, which are as necessary to be believed and done, as any that are contained in it, *E. G.* that there is a God.—And during the Old Testament-Dispensation, that there is a Life after this. That a Man is to love himself. It supposes also, that we know what it is to be just and temperate, &c.

And, 2^{dy}. Though the Scripture in express words do's not bid us be cautious what we make our End, or chief Desire, yet it does the same in Effect in divers Places : As where *Solomon* doth take such an exact Survey of our Nature, and of the World, that he might find out what is that Good we should do, or seek after, all the Days of our Life. And he resolves what that is, *Eccles. 3. 12, 13.*

Again ; Where our Saviour commends *Mary*, *Luke 10. 42.* for having chosen that good Part, and rebukes her Sister *Martha* for being troubled about many Things ; he by this counsels us to be careful, not to lose our selves, and spend our Time and Care on a Multitude of useless inconsiderable Things, but that we should have our Hearts set on that one Thing that is best, and most needful.

And so here in the Text. He who came on purpose to make known unto us the Way of Life, and to shew us how we are to steer our Course in the midst of those Rocks and Sands where we are : he has declared unto
us

us what we are chiefly to mind. He well knew, that unless we were rightly determined in this case, we must inevitably miscarry. He therefore in consideration of, and compassion for our condition, has given us most full and plain directions, what that is which we ought first and chiefly to mind, to aim at, and to endeavour in our whole Life.

This our Lord has done implicitly in many places, but in none more expressly and designedly than in those Words of his, *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness*, i. e. the good state of all. That God's Kingdom may prevail against, and be set up above all Kingdoms whatsoever; that they all may be brought into subjection unto it; and that whatever opposes it, may be subdued.

What is meant
in general by
the Kingdom
of God.

By *the Kingdom of God* in general, we are to understand his powerful Sway, and wise Management of all things, so as they shall serve most excellent Purposes; they shall all in one way or other further and bring about the Designs which Infinite Goodness has laid.

Now this Kingdom is Universal and Eternal; it is universal, *it Rules over all*, says the Scripture; all things in Heaven and Earth, and Hell, even the Devils are subject unto it; they are all within its compass, and under its Power; the whole World, and all that is therein, are in subjection to God, and controulable by his Almighty Power, whenever he pleases to exert it; and they are
so

so over-ruled, that they do serve the great and good Ends, which he fore-saw and fore-determined.

It is also Eternal, that is, thus it has been in all Ages of the World, and will be to Everlasting; all things are so guided and governed by the over-ruling Providence, which powerfully, but sweetly insinuates it self into all, and runs swiftly through the World, that they do, as they ever did and ever shall, accomplish the Ends of the Divine Counsel.

In this notion of the *Kingdom of God* our Saviour does not require us to pray for it, nor to use our endeavours that it may be; for thus it always was and will be.

Indeed this is a comfortable consideration to a Man who has *Faith and Hope in God*, that all things are in God's hands; it is matter of rejoicing to such a one, that the World does not run at random; nor is disposed of by Foolish and Wicked Men, and by Malicious, Cruel Spirits; but that all their Contrivances and Actions are under the inspection of that Wisdom which sees All things; controuled by that Power that is over All; and conducted by a Providence that is extended throughout the World, according to the best and wisest Counsels. This is matter of great Joy to every lover of Good: And our Lord has taught us, with Prayer and Thanksgiving to acknowledge this in the conclusion of his Prayer, *For thine is the Kingdom, and Power, and Glory.*

D d

This

This then cannot be the sense of the Phrase here, because we should then seek what is, and endeavour to set up a Kingdom which always was, and ever will be.

What the Text means by the Kingdom of God in particular.

But that which I understand by the *Kingdom of God* here, and where we are commanded to pray that it *may come*, is, that God's Sovereignty and Rule over all the World, and Mankind in particular, may become so visible and conspicuous, that it may be acknowledged and willingly submitted unto by all Men; and that they may be willing and obedient Subjects of this Kingdom.

This is that which we desire of God, when we pray unto him, that his *Kingdom may come*, i. e. that he would manifest his Sovereign Authority in all such ways as may constrain Men to submit themselves, and to live under his Government, that therefore he would Enact and Publish his Laws, and vindicate them in such a manner, that it may be seen and confess'd by all Men.

In sum; We ask of God in this Petition, that he would do whatsoever may declare his Sovereignty, and assert the Supreme Authority of his Government amongst Men; whether it be a farther and clearer manifestation of his Will, such as was made by our Lord and his Holy Spirit; or, whether some Acts of Power be exerted for the Protection and Preservation of his obedient Subjects, or for the punishment of the Refractory and Rebellious; such as was remarkably

remarkably done to both at the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, when the *Jews* who believed and obeyed the Gospel, were saved from that Ruine; in which the unbelieving and disobedient were involv'd.

This is that we pray to God for, when we desire *his Kingdom may come*; as also that he would assist us, and all Men so by his Grace, that we and they may do what in us lies to farther it.

And when our Saviour enjoyns us to *seek it*, and *in the first Place to seek it*, he would have us use our utmost Endeavours to erect, to establish, to advance God's Throne and Government in our own, and all Mens Hearts and Lives; that his Authority may be acknowledged, and his Laws obeyed by our selves, and by all Men.

Now that we may have a clearer and more distinct Understanding of this Matter, it will not be amiss to consider in what Condition God's Kingdom was, and how his Authority was acknowledged at first, and afterwards until, and at the Time of the coming of our Saviour.

Our first Parents, to whom God had made known his Laws, soon brake them, and so incurr'd the Penalty denounced in that Expression, *Thou shalt die*.

Their first Posterity, whose Blood was tainted, followed the Example of their rebellious Parents, and exceedingly corrupted their Way; insomuch that God sent the Flood upon the World of the Ungodly, and destroyed from the Face of the Earth them

How God's Government was acknowledged and subverted unto from the Beginning until our Saviours appearance.

who would not amend, but preserved righteous *Noah* and his Family from perishing by the Waters.

After the Flood till *Abraham*, we have little Account how it went with God's Government on Earth, but this we think, that Mankind in general had no other Laws of Heaven but those which are writ in the Heart, except some few, which they had by Tradition, as those which are call'd the Precepts of the Sons of *Noah*.

Afterward God selected *Abraham* and his Family, and with them made the Covenant of Circumcision : But all this while, and after, did God govern Mankind by the Law of Nature, the Law writ in their Hearts ; that is, whatever by natural Reason they discovered to be Good and agreeable to Man, singly considered, and in Society, and their natural Instincts did point, and their Inclinations did lead them unto, that they concluded to be the Will of God, who was the Author of their Nature and Reason, and whom they understood to be so good as to will all, and nothing but what is Good.

This was the Common Law of Heaven by which God governed the Earth ; to these he added his Statutes, *i. e.* made particular Revelations of his Will to some Men, and by them to others ; but this he did especially to the Posterity of his Servant *Abraham*, to *Moses*, and after him to the Prophets whom he sent to the *Jews*, and not only to them, but to the *Gentiles* also. Thus God published his Laws to the World, but Men transgressed

gressed them ; they generally threw off his Yoke, disobeyed, were not subject to his Authority ; which came to pass, partly through their own Wickedness, and partly through the Instigation of those wicked and malicious Spirits, who, having themselves rebelled against their Maker, were out-law'd and exiled from Heaven, and have been industrious in drawing the Children of Men to be Partners with them in their Rebellion.

And then as to their Worship ; Many were Worshippers of evil Spirits, most worshipped those that were no Gods ; and all, very few excepted, worshipped the true God in a false Manner ; but all, without Exception, were become disobedient to his Law : there was *none that did Good*, that did the Good which Man might do in this State.

And by this general Corruption, they put themselves under the Power of the Devil, and he used them as his Vassals : They did his Will, and worshipped him ; and he did to their Estates, to their Bodies, and to their Souls, what he pleased.

So that this great Usurper had, in a manner, thrown out the Government of God, whose of Right it was, and had set himself in the Throne : He was now become *the Prince, the God of this World*.

Thus was it with God's Regiment on Earth when Christ appeared ; there were but few who acknowledged a Subjection due to this Supreme Lord : whereupon God sent his only begotten Son to re-establish his
D d 3 Throne,

Throne, and to subdue and vanquish the grand Rebel the Devil, by force to pull him down; to restrain, and not suffer him to king, and to god it, as he had done by his Oracles, by his so frequently possessing himself of Men's Bodies, by his visible Appearances, &c.

How our Saviour promoted and advanced it.

And the Way our blessed Lord took to effect all this, was by his holy, and true, and perspicuous Doctrine, by his most excellently good and blameless Life, by his unparallel'd Sufferings, by the admirable Works which he wrought, by his Resurrection from the Dead, by his wise Institutions and Ordinances, by enduing his Apostles and first Followers with Power of doing Mighty Things, by giving the Holy Spirit to all that seek it: In short, by doing all that was necessary to be done for the Acknowledgment and Honour of God's Government; all that was useful for the Instruction of those that were ignorant or deceived, or for the disingtangling them who were in the Snare of the Devil, or the rescuing of them that were led captive by him; and to communicate whatever Strength they wanted, who had made themselves unable to do good, and so to reduce the rebellious Race of *Adam* to their Allegiance, to their rightful Sovereign.

Now that our Saviours great Undertaking might be accomplished, he requires all that would be his Followers, to make this their chief Aim and Business, to assert God's Sovereignty, and to exalt his Throne in the World;

World ; to make it appear, that God is the rightful Supreme Lord of all ; to engage all Men into a willing Subjection unto him, by a Cheerful and Universal Obedience to his Laws, by a quiet and sincere Submission to his Administration, by being wholly and willingly at his Disposal.

This we may understand in general by that Phrase, *The Kingdom of God*. To which our Saviour adds, for further Explication, *his Righteousness* : Not as if this were diverse from the other, but (after the *Hebrew* manner of speaking) it is declarative and explanative of the other ; at least it explains that of *the Kingdom of God*, which might be most over-looked and neglected, and yet was most fit and necessary to be minded by us ; that without which we could not possibly come to those Joys, and that Glory, which, it may be, we should be most apt to look after, this being the only Way and Means to, the natural and immediate Spring of our greatest Satisfaction ; insomuch that without this Righteousness we cannot be, and if we have it, we cannot but be happy. Nay, itself is our highest Perfection, and consequently the principal part of our Happiness.

What meant
by Gods Righteousness.

But yet we being corrupted, and having an Averfation to the Law of God, therefore our wise and faithful Instructor has express'd that which ought to be most, and yet probably might be least regarded ; *viz.* his Righteousness, or our Obedience to the Divine Laws.

We are willing to hear of Rewards and Enjoyments, of Bliss and Glory, but we are apt to be careless of our Duty, and of those Performances which only can fit us for Happiness, and make us capable of Recompence. We love to think of being in Heaven, but not of the Way that leads to it. We abstract Joys and Pleasures from those Works, and from that Disposition, which can alone prepare us for, and make us capable of them, and from which indeed they are inseparable.

To prevent these Mistakes which have a very ill Influence on our Lives, has our Saviour added these Words [*his Righteousness*] which is that Righteousness which God now under the Gospel-Administration requires of us, and helps us to attain— viz. That we, and all Men may give such an Obedience to the Divine Laws now published by Christ, as is enjoyn'd by God in this Dispensation, and is sutable unto it: that is, That we all live in the good Use of our selves, governing our Appetites and Passions, our Inclinations and Actions with Understanding and Goodness; mortifying the Lusts and Deeds of the Flesh, and making all our Members and Faculties the Instruments of Righteousness; being knowing and wise, temperate and chaste, humble and modest, meek and quiet, active and diligent in our selves.—

True and honest, just and faithful, civil, courteous and charitable unto all; merciful, kind, bountiful, as the Necessities and Merits

rights of others call for, and as our own Ability and Opportunity will help us. To be respectful to Superiors, to be just and fair to Equals, condescending to Inferiors, obedient to Governours, diligent and moderate in our Government of others. In short, to do all that Good to, and with others, which our Relation to the Place in which we stand to them, does engage, or incline, or enable us to do.—

And in reference to our Saviour, that we receive him, that we believe and love, obey and imitate him; that we apply to him as the Mediator betwixt God and us; that we go to him as our Priest, who has offered a Sacrifice to God on our behalf; and that we depend on his powerful Intercession with the Father for us; that we be instructed by him as our Prophet, give Obedience to his Precepts, and betake our selves to him for Protection, to whom God has given all Power, and made him Lord of the whole World; that we make use of him to all those Purposes to which God has designed and set him apart, and publickly to own, and confess to others that we so do. —

And that in all this we ultimately refer our selves to the God and Father of Jesus Christ, the Original of all Being, and Supreme Lord of all; that we ascribe all Honour to him, loving and fearing him with all our Hearts, and above all Things; having Faith and Hope in him alone, praying to him for all our Want, and praising him
for

for all the Good we or others have; and in all that we do, having chief Regard to his Will, to what he commands and designs, aiming in all our Undertakings at this, to please and glorifie our heavenly Father.

This is an Abridgement of the chief Heads of the Divine Laws. And when our Saviour requires us to *seek after God's Righteousness*, he intends, that we should endeavour that we and all Men may live in Obedience to these, and such like Commands.

What manner
of Obedience
is meant by
God's Righte-
ousness.

But it may be farther enquired, What Manner of Obedience that is, which we must give to the Laws of God? And here we must not only consider what God commands us, but what he does himself. Perhaps our Saviour intended to signifie this by *his Righteousness*. So that God is here looked on not only as our Law-giver and King, but as our Pattern and Example. *His Righteousness* is not only what he requires of us, but what himself does, that we should be righteous, as he is.

And in both these Respects, of his Command, and of his Example, that is truly God's Righteousness, when we obey his Will universally from clear Understanding, of free Choice, and do thus constantly. When knowing God's Will and Counsel, we willingly conform to it alway; that is, That we have Respect, that we give Obedience to all God's Commandments.

That

That we do this with our whole Man, in Body, Soul and Spirit; that we be not only outwardly, and in Appearance conformable to the Law of God, but inwardly, and in Spirit; that every Thought be brought into Obedience, that all that is within us be subject, and do homage and service to him.

That all this proceed from a true, clear, and certain Knowledge of what the Will of the Lord is; and how reasonable and fit it is, that we should be subject unto it.

That we therefore most heartily, and with greatest Freedom consent, and resolve to obey God; that we do this not out of Constraint or Fear, but of Choice.

And that we do not thus by fits, and for a Time, but continually, and for ever, without ceasing, without End.

Thus *God is righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works*, Psal. 145. 17. *And there is no Unrighteousness in him.*— *He is Light, and in him is no Darkness at all.* 1 John 1. 5.

God, as he is naturally and essentially, so he is most wisely, and most freely holy and just; therefore he is so eternally and unalterably.——

And the nearer Approaches we make to God in any of these Particulars, the more of his Righteousness we may be said to have; that is, the more universally, the more largely and extensively holy and good we are, the more we do well from a Principle of Knowledge, and the clearer and perfecter, that is, the more free and willing we are,
and

and the more constant and lasting in our Works of Righteousness: the more truly and properly may it be said of us, that we are Righteous, as God is, and consequently have, and do his Righteousness.

Four Sorts of
Righteousness
differing from
that of God's.
As,

This is the Righteousness of Christ, and of Christians, of God, and of Heaven; which we shall apprehend more distinctly, by comparing it with those Sorts of Righteousness which differ from it.

Human and
Civil.

1. The first of these may be called a Human, Civil, Secular Righteousness, fitted only for our Condition on the Earth. By this I mean a Compliance with, and conformity to the Will of Man, the Laws and Orders of those that are above us; or the Pleasure of any meer Man whatsoever, without Respect had to God.

The Source and Spring of this Righteousness is no higher than the Brute, or the meer Animal, earthly, worldly Man; and it will rise no higher than its first Spring: It issues in fleshly Gratifications, sensible Enjoyments, and a worldly Happiness.

As it is (to use Scripture-phrases) no more but a doing *the Will of the Flesh, or of the Will of Man*; so no more will come of it, than that the Lusts of the Flesh will be fulfilled, or such a Happiness be attain'd as Men can bestow.

This Righteousness gives a Superiority, and pays an Homage to Men, in receiving their Opinions, and obeying their Orders upon their sole Authority. Or else it is a Compliance with natural Inclination, without

out any Regard to the Author of Nature : so that this being of an earthly Original, may be the Righteousness of a meer political Man, a Man of this World, an Infidel, a Sadducee, a down-right Atheist : For God is not acknowledged in all this.

We may obey the Commands of Men, and observe the Dictates of our animal-sensible Nature ; we may comply with the Orders, and Customs, and Humours of the Country where we live, and yet not work the Righteousness of God in all this : for all this may be done where there is no Belief of, or Regard to God.

2. Another Righteousness I may call Indifferently a *Jewish* or a *Gentile* Righteousness. Jewish and Gentile. St. Paul, Rom. 10. 3. tells us, that the *Jews* being ignorant of the Righteousness of God, and going about to establish their own Righteousness, had not submitted themselves to the Righteousness of God ; that is, they not knowing, or perhaps disallowing that Righteousness which God intended to bring into the World by Christ, and fully possessed with an high Esteem of that Law which was given by *Moses*, they would not submit to the Law or Faith of Christ, supposing that it was contrary to, and wholly inconsistent with the Law of *Moses*. *Sic pertinaciter inherent Rudimentis Pietatis, ut veram Pietatem rejiciant ; sic premunt ac urgent Umbras ac Simulacra Pietatis, ut ipsum Veritatis Fontem aspernantur, saies Erasmus,*

Thus

Thus the *Jews* acknowledg God, owning and submitting to his Laws and Ordinances by *Moses* ; but the fuller and clearer Discovery of God's Will by Christ, they will not own.-- The more imperfect and less God-like Administrations, wherein were carnal Ordinances, and temporary Promises, they approve and adhere to ; but that which is more spiritual and divine, consisting of spiritual Precepts and Rewards, they can by no means away with. That which was wholly made up with Types and Shadows, Ceremonies, and Out-sides, and political Constitutions, and was followed with present and temporal Rewards, was preferred by them before the substantial, the inward, the invisible, the not only political, but personal Righteousness, which is brought in by the Gospel.

This *Jewish* Righteousness is found also amongst many, who are not called *Jews*.--- Alas ! how many are the baptized Christians who yet are only Profelytes of this *Jewish* Righteousness, are only for Shews and Ceremonies, and meer political Constitutions, a pompous Religion, and a worldly Church, forgetting those never-to-be-forgot Places.----- *The Kingdom of God consists not in Meats and Drinks, but in Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost.*--- *And my Kingdom is not of this World, &c.*

I name no one Sect or Company of Men, because I doubt too many of all Ways and Parties are of this Number, and deserve the same Censure which the unbelieving *Jews* had

had from *St. Paul*, that they either know not, or like not *the Righteousness of God*, but go about to establish *their own*.

That which I called the *Gentile* or *Pagan* Righteousness, may also be stiled the *Theists*. For they profess to obey the Laws writ in their Hearts, and revealed to them by Reason, but not those which are made known by Christ in the Gospel : Faith in, and all Acknowledgments of him, and Application to God by him they wholly omit. They receive many Doctrines which Christ has delivered, and observe much of what he has commanded, but this is for some other Reason, not out of Respect to the Authority of our Saviour: and so they neglect whatever they do not see to be consonant to their Reasonings, though it be never so much authorized by him ; which, according as it is better or worse, of a greater or lesser Compass, they believe and do more or less.

To keep within Matters of Practice : These Men will not worship the Son of God, nor plead his Sacrifice, nor make use of his Intercession, nor receive Counsel from him in any Case : They do not believe his Predictions, nor fear his Threatnings, nor rely on his Promises : Briefly, they cut themselves short of all that Righteousness which by Christ we are taught, and engaged, and assisted to do ; such as mortifying our Lusts, governing our Passions, restraining and rectifying our Inclinations to evil, forgiving and loving, and doing good to our Enemies ; which are very seldom, or very hardly attained

tained by either the Followers of Nature, or the Disciples of *Moses*. And as they are not so commonly and easily attained by them, so neither in that Perfection in which they are by true Christians.

Thus you see what it is I call a *Jewish* and a *Gentile* Righteousness: 'tis that which leaves out Christ, and all that refers unto him; all that has him for its Object or Author; all that which by the Gospel we are instructed in, and engaged unto. And this, I say, is not the Righteousness of God (though both the Natural and Mosaic was from him) so long as it stands in Opposition with this which comes by Christ.

The Apostles call this the *Jews own Righteousness*; and I take my Warrant for this Expression from him. But if this do not hinder or oppose the Righteousness of God that is by Christ, but only fall short of it, if we go no farther than natural Reason, or *Moses with the Veil on him*, will lead us, 'tis then only part of God's Righteousness.

Pharisaical
and Hypocri-
tical.

3. Another Sort of Righteousness which is not God's, is that of *Pharisees* and *Hypocrites*: Our Saviour tells us, that *except our Righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. There were two most notorious Defects in theirs: 1st. It was partial; and, 2^{ly}. heartless.

1. They would mortifie their sensual Inclinations, and curb their Appetites after fleshly Pleasures, but laid the Reins on the more salvage and Diabolick. They would fast

fast from Meat, but they would be covetous and proud, angry and revengeful, uncharitable and unjust.

Again, 2^{ly}. They would pray, and give Alms, and pay Tithes of all they had, &c. that they might appear devout and charitable Persons, tho at the same Time they neither feared God, nor loved Men; they made a great Appearance of doing and being what they neither did nor were.

That Man who will do some Things which God commands, but leave others undone,—or will make shew of keeping all the Commands, but his Heart is not with him in what he does, he is yet under the Pharisaic Dispensation, his Righteousness does not exceed that of the *Pharisees*; it is not that entire hearty Righteousness, which only is the Righteousness of God.

4. There is another Righteousness of the Superstitious and Enthusiast, that is, of Fancy and Conceit, Imagination and Humour, Ignorance and Error, ill Reasoning and foolish Passion, fond Hopes and groundless Fears, Raptures, and Transports of vain Joys. Neither is this the Righteousness of God.

No, nor any other that is not agreeable to Nature, that has not its Foundation in Truth, that is not accompanied with Knowledge and wise Thoughts, and that does not do good. I might give Multitudes of Instances of this, if needful: relying on the Intercessions of Saints, and of the Virgin *Mary*, worshipping God by, or before Images; numbring out so many Prayers, imposed

E e Con:

Confessions, and undergoing Penances, and a thousand such Pieces of Righteousness, which they have in the Church of *Rome*. But we need not go to them for Instances of this, we have too many among our selves under the Guilt either of Superstition, or of Enthusiasm. Nay, there are but few quite free from all Spice of them.

Thus I have shewed you a Four-fold Righteousness which is not God's. And by the Consideration of what has been said, I hope we have more distinct Thoughts of what is his : Of that which is in God, which he commands us, which he does approve, and which he will reward.

The Sum of what I have said of it, is this ; That it is an understanding, and willing and constant Obedience to all the Commands of God, which are either writ by Nature in our Hearts, or declared to us by God's Prophets ; but especially those that are published in the Gospel by the Son of God himself. Which considered with that Perfection of our Natures, and that inward Peace consequent upon it, together with the Divine Protection, and the Blessings of this Life ; but especially that eternal Happiness with which the infinitely good God will reward it hereafter : These make up the whole Notion of the Kingdom of Heaven.

So then according to this Explication, which I have offer'd, that which our Saviour has here set before us to be sought in the first Place, is, That due Acknowledgment may be made to God, that he be served
and

and honoured by our, and all Men's obeying the Divine Laws, particularly those given by Christ; and so may be protected and provided for whilst we are here; and that we may all come to that Perfection and Bliss, whither by such a Righteousness God will bring us.

In this Account I have carefully observed the most proper and usual Signification of the Words, and have taken them in that Sense which is most large and comprehensive, that to which all other Explications are fairly reduceable, which is safest also, and least liable to Misconstruction. And I look on it as agreeable to what our great Master has taught us to pray for; *That God's Kingdom may come, and that his Will may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

He taught his Disciples at the Beginning of this Chapter to pray for this, which at the End of it, he exhorts them to seek after, (a Word that comprehends Praying, and something more) that is, they are by Prayer to God, and all other Means, to endeavour the setting up, and establishing, and exalting the Throne and Government of God on Earth; and to bring both themselves and others to be the Subjects of it; to obey the Laws, and enjoy the Immunities and Privileges, and receive the Rewards, and be Partakers of the Happiness of it.

This our Saviour would have to be sought by us *first*; i. e. Principally, before and above all other Things; that we bestow most of our Care and Pains, of our Study and

What meant
by seeking
first, &c.

Labour on this ; that we be most desirous of, and most diligent in our Pursuit after this.

That we take more Care to be good our selves, and to make others so, than we do to raise our selves or Families to Estates and Honours, or any worldly Greatness whatever ; that we be more earnest that God should rule in the Hearts and Lives of Men, than we are for any, for all Things else ; that the bringing our own Souls and Mankind into this State, to be the obedient Subjects of the Kingdom which God sets up by the *Messiah*, and to enjoy the inestimable Benefits of it, should be the Study and Business of our whole Life. This may suffice for Explication.

I now proceed to give the Reasons why, setting all other things aside, we should lay out our selves, and spend our Lives upon this wholly.

Arguments respect either God's Kingdom, or our seeking it.

The Arguments which perswade to this, are such as either respect the Kingdom and Righteousness which are to be sought, or our seeking them. And if I can make it appear, not only that, 1st. This Kingdom is a Thing excellently good in it self ; nay, that it is better than any, than all Things else ; and that it is attainable : But, 2^{ly}. That our seeking it thus earnestly and principally, besides, that it is necessary, and of Efficacy to the attaining this, is also very becoming, and on other Accounts, beneficial. If I can make out, that it is incomparably the best Thing, that it is no Way impossible, nor

nor unlikely ; and that our seeking it is both necessary, and in some sort, will be effectual for the attaining it ; I shall have given full Satisfaction to every one, why we should, before, and above all other Things, seek this.

I. I Begin to shew, that this is a most excellent Thing, the very best and most desirable of all things whatsoever. To make out this, we'll consider how futable and becoming, how just and fit, how beneficial and profitable it is, that God should govern, and be obeyed by all Men.

The first Argument relating to God's Kingdom, taken from the Suitableness and Fitness of it, because absolute Sovereignty is God's Right.

1. Is it not fit that he should rule, whose Right it is ? And is it not his Right to rule, whose we and all Men are ? And are we not his, who made us at first, and who preserves us continually ? Did not God give us our Life, and do not we hold our Life, and all we are and have, from him, and at his Pleasure ?

Now then, is it not most fit and congruous, most just and equal, that his Government should take place, and that we and all Men living, should be his Leige-Subjects, and acknowledge his Sovereignty over us by an Universal Compliance with, and Observance of his Will, that Will on which we depend in all that we have, and hope for ?

This is but a just Gratitude for the many Blessings which we have already received : this is but a wise Care to procure to our selves those many more and greater, which we yet want. Can we do less than live in

Obedience to him, by whom we do live? Should not all Men pay this Tribute, in Acknowledgment that he holds our Souls in Life? And how unreasonably foolish should we be to expect any farther Expressions of God's Good-will towards us, when we refuse to receive the Counsels and Directions, and submit to the Commands of that Good-will? In this we contradict our selves: for at the same time we both acknowledge and deny our Dependance on the Will of God; we say we expect all Good from the Divine Will, and yet we oppose, or neglect it, and refuse the Good it offers. Can these consist together? Must we not either disclaim our Dependance on God, or ought we not to express our Sense of it, by obeying his Commands, owning him our true Lord, whom we call the Father of our Being, and the Author of all our Good?

By this, I hope, the Matter is plain, that it is but just and fit, that God should be acknowledged and obeyed by Men: But that I may give more abundant Satisfaction in this Thing on which so much depends, I go on,

II. And I demand of every one that will say, he would not have God to rule, neither in his own Heart, nor in other Men's, neither in himself, nor the World; I ask, what then he would have? Whether he would set up his own Will, or some other Men's? Or, whether he would be under no Government at all?

I. Who-

1. Whosoever would acknowledg no Superiour, but make his own Will his Law, how contrary soever it be to Nature and Reason, he in this acts in Contradiction to himself. For there is that in every Man, that forces him to think he is an inferiour Being, in respect of Power, of Knowledg, and of Goodness; and that he depends on some other for what he is, and has; that he is not his own Original, and therefore he who made him, and from whom, and by whose Contrivance and Goodness he is, is Superiour to him. If he therefore go about to make himself Supreme, he attempts a foolish, an unreasonable, an unnatural Thing, that, in which he will oppose himself so long as he retains Human Nature. For there is that in Man's Soul, which will always acknowledg its own Dependance and Little-ness, and Subjection, and the Superiority of him, by whose powerful and wise Goodness it was first made, and does subsist,

No Man ought to give absolute Sovereignty to his own Will.

Now for Man to go about to make himself Absolute, and that he will have no Lord over him, is not only an undue Usurpation, but a most fruitless, vain, and impossible Attempt. For he endeavours to make himself be what he is not, and what he cannot be, nor think he is; that is, he would be original, absolute, independant, supreme, when as he is derivative, limited, precarious, relative, inferiour,— and cannot but think thus of himself.

And because here is the great Contest betwixt God and Man, Whether shall govern,

the Divine Will, or our own? I would ask him, Who would have no Law, but the Dictates of his own Will; Art thou wise and good enough for thine own Conduct? Dost thou understand thy Nature, all thy many Faculties, and the Subordination of them to each other, their several Perfections, and the best State of them all? Dost thou understand the Ways of the workings of thine own Mind? Dost thou know the Spring of those Thoughts which are in thy Soul? Canst thou discern the mutual Influences, which thy Soul and Body have on each other? Or, canst thou fore-see what Operations other Things without will have on thee? Dost thou know the Extent of thine own Power, and canst thou determine the utmost Limits to which it may be enlarged?

I am sure, that no Man that thinks what he saies, will pretend to understand these Things: And if he be ignorant of them, he ought not to think himself sufficient for his own Conduct. How should he make Laws for one he knows not? How should he direct in a Way, of which he is ignorant?

Besides, I doubt no Man is so good, that he may safely trust himself with himself: Every Man's Necessities are so great, that they call for a constant uninterrupted Supply; and that must be the Effect of a never-failing, never-ceasing Goodness, such as no Man has, nor can pretend to, no not to himself.

For that Goodness which we have is not
con-

constant, it is often interrupted, and ceases for the Time; it is also diverted to other Objects.

And I am perswaded, if we were to receive all that from our selves, which we have from God, we should be weary of doing Good unto our selves, and omit some of those numberless good Things which we now have. Therefore the infinitely wise and good God, who knows better what is good for us, than we do our selves, has not deposited the most excellent Things with us, but himself keeps them for us, *viz.* the Assistances of his Spirit.

And it is well for us, that the Springs, the Beginnings and Continuance of both our natural and spiritual Life are with, and from God; not only because of his Understanding and Power, but because of his Goodness that far exceeds ours. He is better to us, he loves us more, more constantly and incessantly, than we do our selves.

But if we could suppose, that we wanted not Good-will unto our selves, yet every Man is impotent and unable of himself to do the Good he desires.

Thou that art so Arrogant, as to think thy self wise and good enough for thine own Conduct, art thou able to do what thou hast so well and wisely resolved? Who does not find his Power short of his Understanding, and that he knows much more than he can do? Whose Designs and Contrivances do not exceed his Ability to compass and finish them?

For

For Instance : We feel in our selves a Desire to be happy, and this so strong and lasting, that we may conclude, if we could we should be so presently. Well ! but we lay our Design, so as that it shall be effected in Time ; we confess it impossible to be done by us on the sudden, therefore our Contrivance is for the Future.

And is not this a plain Declaration of our insufficiency ? Since the Future does not depend on us at all, we know not whether that Time, which is not, will ever come. *Ye say, saies St. James, ch. 4. 13, 14. to Day or to Morrow we will go into such a City, and buy and sell, and get Gain : whereas ye know not what shall be on the Morrow. For what is your Life ? It is even a Vapor that appears for a little Time, and then vanishes away. And Verse 15. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that.* By all which he intends to bring Men to an Acknowledgment of their Insufficiency of, and by themselves to do what they design to do ; and to own their Dependance on God. Thou sayest thou wouldst have this, and thou wilt do that ; and this is said without respect to God or any other besides thy self : But thou shouldst first say, I will continue my Life another Day, nay, another Moment : For if thou diest, then all these Thoughts perish ; and thou mayst die the very next Moment for ought thou knowest, or canst do.

But suppose thy Life continue ; Art thou sure to continue in the same Mind to Morrow, thou art to Day ? Will thy Thoughts

a Year hence be the same they are now? Is it in thy Hand to make them so? Canst thou keep off those Changes, which may be made in thy Mind by bodily Diseases, by Exercise of thy own Thoughts, by the Discourses of other Men? Thus thou canst not be sure to have the same Thoughts and Desires in future, which thou hast at present.

But if that be supposed too, yet how canst thou say, I will do, I will have this or that? If the effecting of it depend only on thine own Will and Power, Why dost thou not what thou resolvedst to do? Why hast thou not what thou wouldst have at this present? If it depend not on something else besides, methinks it should immediately ensue the very willing it, unless a Man does not will, no not to be happy at present; or his Power be not determined by his Will; and if it be not now, neither can he think it will be hereafter: so that though it were in his Power to accomplish what he designs, yet if that Power be not at the Disposal of his Will, 'tis all one as if it were not in the Disposal of his Power. And then, if the having what I desire does depend on other Things beside my self, I cannot be sure, that they will more concur hereafter to make me attain what I wish for, than they do at this Time.

This is sufficient to shew our Inability to do all that we may be so wise as to know, and so good as to design. And since every Man must, if he think truly, be sensible of his own great Defects, and Shortness in Under-

derstanding, in Goodness, and in Power, he will confess surely, that as *the Way of Man is not*, so neither ought it to be in himself: But that as he is not wise, nor good, nor powerful enough for himself, so he should not live wholly of, and by, and for himself; that he should not be absolutely and universally determin'd by his own Will, which is guided by weak Reasons and uncertain Conjectures, and is accompanied with feeble Power, and is it self imperfectly Good.

This, I hope, may suffice to dissuade us from affecting to be Absolute, or owning no Lord over us, from setting up our own Will, or Humour, or Fancy, as our only Law; not meerly because it is an Usurpation, and belongs not to us, but also because we are unqualified, and insufficient for it: we have neither Right, nor sufficiency to do thus.

Nor to the
Wills of other
Men.

2. And if we ought not to give Absoluteness and Sovereignty to our own Wills over our selves, so much less to other Men's. Another Man cannot understand my State so well as I may, and for the most part do mine own: Nor will he probably have so much Good-will for me, as I have for my self. Neither is it possible for him, who is at a distance from me, to do that for me, which I, being always nearest, may do for my self; and on all these Accounts is less fit to rule over me, than I am.

Besides, there is such a Likeness in the Natures and Conditions, and almost an Equa-

Equality in the Powers and Faculties of Men, that on these Accounts one can hardly challenge a Superiority over others, but they will think they may have as much Right to rule him, as he them. And 'tis not imaginable, that they should ever consent to be absolutely and universally at the Disposal of any Man, though for Order and Peace-sake they will allow him a limited and Conditional Obedience.

But to make any Man absolute, is to give him a Dominion too big for him to exercise ; to say, I will do his Will, and his only, is to say more than can be done : For let him lay on me what Commands he please, tho I do them, yet I shall do somewhat else : tho I do what he commands, yet I may do it unwillingly and against my Mind, which yet he cannot know, and consequently not punish ; and so my Mind and Will, that which is best in me, is not under his Rule.

If therefore any would be so vain, as to assume, or I so foolish as to give the entire Government of my self to them, 'tis a Province too big for them to manage ; since that which is Principal in me falls not under their Cognisance. So senseless a Thing it is for any one to deliver up himself wholly and unconditionally to the Disposal and Government of another.

This I take to be the Meaning of our Saviour's Precept ; *Call no Man Master upon Earth.* i. e. Deliver not your selves up to the Teaching and Rule of any Man absolutely and universally.

Not ought he
to live without
all Govern-
ment.

3. It is every jot as foolish to live without all Government : to let a Man's Soul drive as a Ship without a Pilot before every Wind , and be tossed by every Wave, and to aim at no certain Place, to hold no steady Course, to steer by no Compass, to act without End, without Rule, to live without Check or Controul from any other, or from mine own Thoughts.

However some may look on this as the only desirable Life, because of that Appearance of Liberty and Easiness which there is in it ; yet it is so unnatural to, so unworthy of Human Nature, so pernicious to it, and so impossible to be attained, that none ought to endeavour after it.

Man has an Understanding to inform him what he should do ; and a Will to determine him according to that Direction ; and these are the highest Powers which he has. Now for him to neglect, to lay aside these, and to set up some inferiour Faculties in their Rooms, this is to unman himself, and of a rational free Creature, to become a Brute ; nay, as much as may be, a meer natural Agent.

How much below Man is this ? For, tho' a Fancy and Humour may be exalted, and he seems to be set above himself, to be, in some sort, equal with God (which perhaps was part of the Sense of *ye shall be as Gods*) in that he has not the least Curb or Restraint upon his Actions, but he does whatever he pleases ; yet for all this he is not only below his own Kind, but somewhat worse than the Beasts.

For

For the Appetites of Beasts are guided by their natural Instincts and Inclinations, which will conduct them safely and certainly to the End designed for them: But he who sets himself to live without Restraint, will have no Limits set to what he does, and be wholly lawless and ungovernable, must endlessly wander in the Mazes of Error, till he be wearied in his unnatural Follies, and undone by them.

But I have also said, it is impossible to atchieve what these Sons of Anarchy do attempt, that is, to live without all Law and Government.

For there is that in Human Nature which carries with it the Authority of a Law, and does not only direct, but command a Man to act thus and thus, to do this or that, to act, or not to act.

And however Men may, by violent and unnatural Practice, extinguish the Sense they have of the Laws in a great Measure, yet not fully, there will be some obscure Perception of it yet remaining, enough to trouble and disquiet them, when they go contrary unto it.

I believe some of this remains in the most corrupted and depraved Sons of *Adam*. But if we could suppose this Law writ in the Heart to be quite obliterated, yet another will come in its stead; *i. e.* the *Law of Sin and of Death*. And he that was so desirous and industrious to get from under the Government of his rightful and gracious Sovereign, shall now be made a Vassal and
Slave

Slave to the Tyranny of the Devil. His Will will now become as subject to Fancy, to Humour, to every wild Imagination, to Custom, to bodily Temper, and to the evil Spirit that rules by all these, as it was before to Nature and Reason, and all the Appearances of God, and Manifestations of his Will.

Thus I have endeavoured to make appear how very unbecoming and unfutable to Man it is to be lawless, to live from under all Government, without regard to any Will; as I have shewn that he should not be absolutely at the Disposal of any other Man, no, nor that he is his own to dispose of, and to do with himself as he pleases, without Reference or Respect to some other.

All this will, upon a very little Consideration, appear very unnatural and unjust.

Societies obliged by the same Reason.

And the same Discourse which proves, that particular Persons, if they live according to Nature, must neither live without Government, nor yet set up their own Wills as Law, and themselves as Supreme, nor much less other Men, will prove also, that Societies of Men must be governed, and yet not by Laws that are meerly humane.

The more Human Nature, and the principal Faculty Reason exert themselves, and grow up towards Perfection, the more they dispose Men to live in Society, which cannot subsist without Order, nor that without Government, nor that without Subjection

jection and Obedience. Hence we may infer, that this is agreeable to Nature, because it is necessary for the obtaining that which we naturally desire.

But yet no Man can reasonably, nor is it fit he should assume either an Universal Empire over all the Earth, nor yet an absolute and unlimited Dominion over any part, over any one Man in it.

Emperour of all the World, and Universal Oecuminical Pastor, are Titles too august for any meer Man to assume. Nor should any affect such a Dominion over Souls and Consciences, as that Men should in all they do acknowledge their Sovereignty, or that they should in any thing pay to them an absolute Subjection, as to their Supreme Lord.

It is a most horrible Presumption and Self-assuming, for any Man to affect such a Title and Shew of Power. For it's no more than a Name and Shew. And it is a most sacrilegious Derogating from the Honour of God, to give this unbounded Obedience to any other.

And this may suffice to shew how disagreeable it is to the Nature and Reason of Man, that either there should be no Government amongst Men, or that we should all be governed by one, or that we should yield an absolute Subjection to any; or that every Man should set up his own Will as his Law.

What then remains to be concluded, but this, That by the Suffrage of Nature and of Reason, God is our, and all Men's Supreme

Governour; that he, and he only, whose we are, who first made us, and continually preserves us and all Mankind, has therefore such Right and Title to us, as none else can claim.

God only is
qualified for
absolute Go-
vernment.

III. And he also by his Profit and all-knowing Understanding, his Almighty Power and Infinite Goodness, is fit to rule all, and every Man. For he knows Man's Nature and Condition fully; he sees his inward Thoughts and most secret Inclinations. He can take Cognisance of what the Soul does, and therefore can give Law to its Motions, and not only to the outward Actions, as Men must do: He does observe, and will punish every Transgressor of his Law, as he also will abundantly reward every Act of Obedience to it that is done by any Man.

We may be well assured of not only the Authority by which Laws are enacted, but also of the Wisdom and Goodness which makes, and of the Power which establishes them by giving us Assurance, that the Sanctions of Rewards and Punishments shall be executed; that we have the greatest Reason, not only to account him our natural Leige-Lord, but also most freely to elect and chuse him, and to acknowledge, that his is the Kingdom, Power, and Glory; that all Dominion, and Power, and Authority belong to him.

Add to this, That the Sense of every Man convinces him, that he acts in Opposition, not only to his own, but to Universal
Na-

Nature, who will live by no Rule. This is apparently unnatural to him, who either acknowledges a superior Mind on whom he depends, or has an Understanding and Will of his own, which are to no purpose, if they do not serve for the Conduct of his Life and Practice.

If a Man were to be wholly passive, and tossed up and down by every Wind of external Agents that blows upon him, then that self-acting Power, which is in his Nature, is to no purpose. And why should he have an Understanding to shew him what is Good, and the Way he is to go, if after this he be wholly indifferent and uninclined to chuse, and do that Good which he understands, and to walk in that Way to which his Mind directs him.

But I scarce think, that any Man should desire to be wholly undirected by any Understanding, or undetermined by any Will; because this is a more imperfect Principle of Action, than meer Mechanism can pretend to: But this is that which Men generally desire, to be solely at their own Disposal, to be subject to no superiour Will. Now that I may, if possible, pluck up this Root of all Sin and Folly, and of all the Mischief that is in the World, I will add these two Considerations:

1. We cannot, by all that we can do, take our selves wholly from under God's Government, but shall, notwithstanding all our Endeavours to exempt our selves from it, still be under the restraint of his Laws.

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2. If

2. If we could suppose this possible, which is not, it is utterly unimaginable, that we should be governable by our selves, or be wholly at our own dispose.

(1)
No Man can
wholly exempt
himself from
God's Go-
vernment.

As to the first; Let it be considered, that we are made up of certain Faculties and Inclinations, and Appetites, which cannot be laid aside when and as we please. They are not taken up, nor can they be laid down by us arbitrarily and at pleasure.

They are such as these; Desire of the Continuance of Life to its longest Duration, and of the Increase of it to its utmost Capacity; of our most exalted Perfection, and consummate Happiness.

These are Inclinations that we can never put off; And they will necessarily engage us in an Acknowledgment of the Superiority, and so in Obedience to the Will of God; that is, our Thoughts will present us with such an Happiness, as we cannot by our selves procure. We know we did not begin our Lives, nor is it in our Power (we are sensible) to continue them to the next Moment: How then shall we be able to preserve them for ever? But yet we see no Reason to doubt, but that he who made us at first, and has held our Souls in Life thus long, can, if he pleases, do the same to eternal Ages. And whosoever has this Sense of him, as he does by it acknowledge God's Superiority, so he cannot but represent these his Desires to him: and that he may have them accomplished, he will be very careful to enquire after the Counsel, observe the Di-

Directions, and obey the Commands of that powerful Being, who alone can fulfil his Desires, and make him happy; that is, he will take the likeliest Means to obtain his End.

Tho we suppose Men so infected with the Atheistick Surmises of this degenerate Age, as to call the Being of God into Question, (which is the utmost I can suppose, for that Folly will not pretend to Demonstration or Infallibility): tho we imagine a Man doubtful concerning God, yet the Desire he has to be happy, will make him inquisitive how to accomplish it: And discovering no Impossibility, but on the contrary a very fair Probability of the Being of God; and that without this, there is no Possibility that he should ever be happy; he resolves to betake himself to God for help in this Case; and when he does this, hereby he acknowledges and engages himself to Subjection and Obedience.

I might here add, that the very Desire of Happiness, and of Eternal Life, does naturally lead the Soul first into the Belief, and then into the Acknowledgment of God. For if a Man do not think, that there is such an one as can bestow this Happiness on him, he must conclude, that this Desire is foolish and impossible, vain and unnatural; which yet he cannot think, both because it is so universal and unalterable, and because it is of so great and necessary Use in the Government of his Life. And if these Desires be not vain, if they do indeed proceed from

Nature, &c. then there is a God; that is, one who is Superiour to me, and can make me happy.

And if this be granted; then will follow by immediate and undeniable Consequence, that I ought to be subject unto him, to comply with, and be obedient to every Manifestation of his Will.

And thus the Soul that would be absolute and wholly at his own Dispose, for the very same Reason that he would be so, and by the same Method by which he attempts it, is led to the Acknowledgment of a Superior, and to live under his Government.

For it is the Desire of Happiness that makes him affect this Supremacy over himself; and this very Desire of Happiness leads him into the Belief and Acknowledgment of, and Subjection unto God; because he plainly sees there is no other Way to be happy but this.

I proceed to some other Instances of God's Rule over Man, from which he cannot exempt himself. As,

Man cannot withhold his Assent from what appears true.

1. He cannot withhold his inward Assent from that which has the Appearance of Truth: He cannot withhold it from Evidence, nor from being inclined by greater Probability; He must believe what appears true, and as far as it does appear so: And he cannot force his Assent to that which he looks on as a Lie; how contrary soever it be to his inclination, tho it vex and gall him never so much, yet if it be presented to him with a good appearance of Probability, he cannot but so far encline to believe it.

He

He sometimes vainly wishes he could not believe ; and if it were in his own power to hinder it, he would not : But for all this struggling, he does ; which is a plain confession that he cannot do with himself what he would, that he is under the dispose of some other.

2. No Man can will, or desire any thing which he thinks evil, or which he does not apprehend to be good : It appears to him good under some colour or other.

Nor desire
what appears
evil.

And if this be the Condition of Man's Will, (where Liberty is in its Throne) then is it in vain for him to affect an Absoluteness ; because by his very Nature, and the condition of that which of all other things in him is in least Subjection (his very Will it self) he is under constraint.

For he can desire nothing, but that which on some Account or other he thinks to be good ; and he must love every Thing in proportion to the Goodness which he apprehends in it. So then our Will it self, which is looked on as under no Government, and that all our other Faculties are subject unto it, is yet under this Restraint, that it necessarily loves and hates what appears Good and Evil.

Now he that would be indeed Absolute, must first rid himself of such Confinements as these ; let him believe what he thinks a Lye, and love that which he apprehends Evil : If he cannot do thus, let him cease to affect an arbitrary absolute Rule over himself ; let him confess himself to be under some Restraints and Limitations. For tho

he may seem to suppose and allow these yet upon strict Enquiry they will be found Flaws in the very Foundations of that Sovereign Self-government which he would erect.

For if Thought be not a free arbitrary Product, but the necessary Result of the Mind in Converse with Things: And if all that we can do towards its Formation, is to attend duly to the Object, about which we are conversant: And if Thoughts be the Springs, the Beginnings of all our other Actions, then we shall be kept within some Bounds, such as are set by Thoughts, which arise from the Mind in Conjunction with Things. This is the utmost Extent that any Man in his Self-government can pretend unto; if he affects more, it is unnatural and vain.

All that I argue from hence, is, That since we are no necessary Self-Beings, were not of, nor from our selves, but derived our Beings from another, which other must be Superior to us, in that we came from him; and since we find our selves confined within such Limits as these: it follows plainly, that we carry about with us indelible Marks of our Inferiority and Subjection; and that such Bounds are set to us, that we cannot pass.

We naturally
desire Truth
and knowledge.

To descend to some Particulars: We naturally and earnestly desire Knowledge, and to be in the Truth: And no Man is willing to be ignorant or deceived. We likewise have an earnest Desire of the Gratification of every natural Appetite. And this very Desire, if it be closely and constantly

stantly pursued, will certainly bring us under God's Government.

For if we be careful not to be ignorant or mistaken in any Case, we shall then aim at the true Knowledge of what is Good ; and if we once know that, we then know in effect what the Will and Law of God is ; for 'tis the same with what is Good, only under another Notion.

And if we go on to inform our selves universally, we shall come to the Knowledge of God, of our, and all Men's Relation to, and Dependence on him: We shall know, that all Good whatsoever is in the World, is the Effect of his Good-will : and consequently, that when we do good, in that we are obedient Subjects to that which is his Will.

If we add to this Desire of Truth and Knowledge, also an Inclination to what is Fit and Just, (as there is in every Man some Sense of, and Desire after that which becomes him ; in which if he fail, he is inwardly troubled and ashamed) ; if we grant, I say, an Appetite of what is honest and becoming in Man, we do suppose him in Subjection to the Will of God.

VVe naturally incline to what is fit and just, &c.

For if Man believe that God is, he cannot but think it fit, that he do whatever God would have him do ; that he acknowledge the infinite Perfections of God, and his own particular Obligations to him, by Obedience and Submission to whatever God declares to be his Will.

But if we suppose him not yet so far to have prosecuted his Desire of Knowledge,

as to be perswaded of this, yet he cannot avoid thinking the Things that are commanded, to be in themselves fit and becoming; and consequently he will be inclined by his very Nature to do that which God commands, tho not under that Notion, or for that Reason, because God commands it.

I might here proceed to shew particularly, that Man cannot shake off the Yoke of several of God's Laws; as of Gratitude to Benefactors, of Compassionateness to the Miserable, of natural Affection, of Self-love, of keeping my self in such a Plight as to be easie in, and satisfied with my self, of Devotion towards God, of Good-will to those of mine own Kind.

These are so inseparable from human Nature, that very few Men have been able to lay aside any of them; and no Man ever did, or could strip himself of them all.

And that which is readily granted to be in all Men, Self-love, is so linked with the rest, that it will draw them all in. For whoever loves himself, will endeavour his own utmost Perfection. And if he do this, it will necessarily lead him to the Practice of abundance of those Things which God has commanded; it will engage him to live soberly, and righteously, and godly, because such a Life has a manifest Tendency to his Preservation and Perfection.

Object.

Well! but if this be supposed, that every Man does naturally, and in some sort necessarily do some of the Commands of God; yet

yet it does not follow, that he must do them all so, that he can do nothing contrary to them, or that he should obey them because they are God's Will.

To this I reply,

1. It is too true, that Man may do some *Reply.* of the Commands of God, and leave others undone. Obedience is Matter of Liberty, and Experience gives sufficient Proof of this.

2. Obedience to any one of God's Laws, does very strongly infer, and will forcibly incline to the Obedience of the rest.

For if we narrowly enquire what moves us to do any one thing that God does command, we shall find the very same Reason will hold in the rest.

Let any Man give an account why he keeps his Word, and why he is Sober, or the like ; and I will undertake to shew, that he ought on the same account, to be Innocent, and Just, and Charitable, and Devout, and indeed do every of God's Command's.

Besides ; a Man by doing one thing that is good, is disposed to do more ; for there is a near Cognation, and close Conjunction betwixt all God's Commands, all that is Good ; one leads to another, as might easily be shew'd of them all.

As no Man can admit Contradictions into his Understanding, where he discerns them ; and where he does not discern them, they will cause Unquietness and Trouble : so neither can he admit Contradictions into his Practice, if he observe them ; and if he do
not

not observe them, they will prove an hidden Cause of Trouble. Now to avoid this secret disquiet, every Man will take care that his Works be consonant and agreeable, that they be uniform.

In order to this, it is necessary that he should act from one and the same Principle, for one and the same End, and by one and the same Rule : And consequently, that Reason which engages him to obey some of God's Commands, will also run through his Life, and prevail with him to obey the rest.

The strongest Argument to perswade us to do that which is good, is, because it is God's Will.

3. For any one to say that he may please to do that which God hath commanded, but he will not do it because God has commanded, but on other considerations, as because it is good, or because it pleaseth himself, or the like ; this is plainly to lay aside the best and weightiest Reason, and to act on some that are worse and weaker.

For, supposing God to have declared his will to us ; there can be no such powerful Argument as that to perswade and to engage us to observe it : For this signifies not only that the thing is good, but that it is indisputably so ; that it is also exactly good.

Though the single consideration of such a thing is good, be a very good principle of action ; yet if we add this to it, that this which is good, is also the *Will of God*, this heightens and raises it, it increases the goodness that is in it, and adds abundance of force and vigor to it, in so much that he who would be moved by this, that it is good, will be

be forced and constrained, when he considers also, that *It is God's Will* that he should do it.

And whosoever does not think on every thing that is good, as God's Will also, 'tis from the shortness of his Understanding, and because he does not consider matters fully and largely: for if he did, he could not but look on all that is good for us to do, as a Declaration also of the Will of God, that we should do it. For these two Expressions, *It is good*, and *God wills it*, are of equal Extent; that is, God wills all that is good, and nothing but what is good.

So then for a Man to do any thing because it is good, and not because it is God's Will, is to be too abstract, and nice, and contracted in his Thoughts; it is to divide and separate Considerations, which ought not to be parted. It is the effect of a narrow and contracted Mind, that does not consider largely and adequately.

Let me add; that to do a good Action out of respect to God, and in obedience to his Command, encreases and multiplies the Goodness of the Action, and turns a single Vertue into an Act of Obedience and Religion: whereas the doing a Thing meerly because it is good, and because I like it, leaves it in the naturally good Actions.

But to lay aside all Regard to God in the Good which we do, is, if not the corrupting a good Action, and making it Evil, yet a debasing and lessening its Goodness, and will certainly make it less acceptable with God, who sees not only what Men act, but
with

with what Hearts, and from what Principles they do any Thing.

Now there is a manifest and material Difference betwixt the same good Action done by one Man, which is out of regard to God, and in Obedience to his Will; and by another meerly because it is good and grateful to himself; that is, the Work of Faith, this of an Infidel, or an Atheist.

This may serve to shew the Shortness of that Discourse that allows of doing that which is good and pleases my self, but excludes all Consideration of, and regard to God: whereas these two, as they both consist together, so they should be considered together.

And from all this, I hope, it is evident, that Man cannot so break and cast away all God's Cords from him, as in no Instance to be obedient to the Will of God. He does obey, though he do not know it; he does obey whether he will or no; he does that which God wills, though he may not do it because God wills it.

Conscience, a
Sign of God's
Government.

And there are those Things in human Nature, which carry a plain Signification of his Inferiority and Subjection: as besides what I have said, we may add natural Conscience, which does so call Men to account, and approve or condemn what is done with such an Authority, as Man does not, nor can assume over himself, but is executed by Virtue of some secret Commission given unto the Soul by the great Sovereign of the World, which manifestly appears when we arraign,
and

and condemn our selves for some unjust or uncharitable Act to another Man, &c. But then besides all this, let it be farther considered,

2. Supposing this could be done, which cannot, that we could put off all Subjection to God, and break all his Bonds wherewith he holds us, what wretched unmanageable Things should we be? How ungovernable by our selves? We should not know where to have, nor what to do with our selves. If we could imagine a Man universally neglective of God's Will, and that he either does the contrary, or nothing at all, how utterly impossible it is for such an one to govern himself.

(2.)
No Man sufficient to govern himself.

For he can have no Principle to act from, no End to aim at, there is no Good which he designs or desires. And if he pursue Evil universally, he must run upon his own Destruction inevitably. What Rules, what Laws will this Man give himself? What Course can he possibly steer?

It is no way intelligible what he could do with himself, who has quite laid aside all those Laws, which by Nature and Reason, as well as by that which we call Revelation, God has made known unto him.

Suppose a Man lay aside only those Laws which are born with him, which are interwoven in his very Frame and Make, his natural Inclinations; let him be neither inclined to the Perfection of any one Faculty in particular, nor of the good State of himself in general; let him be stript of all Regard

gard to what is honest, fitting, and becoming; Let him discard all Truth and Honesty in his Converse with Men, all Conscience towards God; Let him neither fear God, nor regard Men, nor yet love himself: And who can say what he will then do? What hold can he have of, what Rules can he set to, what Reasons can he urge with himself? He must then be as a Ship without Sails, without Helm, without Compass.

Suppose a Man only Profane and Atheistic; And that he does the things which God commands, but not upon the consideration because God commands them: tho we take him thus, yet he cannot bring himself from under God's Government: For he will not have sufficient Authority over himself; If he exact any Laws from himself, yet how easily will they be broke? for he will presume, nay, he is sure of a Dispensation, of a Pardon.

And as no Man, that thinks himself Supreme, will be severe in inflicting Punishment for defaults on himself; so neither can he amply reward his own Obedience: For, alas! It is but little that he can do for himself; so that he can neither excite in himself any great hopes or fears; how then he should be able to govern himself, I know not.

The Heathen Moralist, when he directed his Scholar, for the better regulating of his Life, to imagine some wise and just Man, some *Cato* with him; by this Advice may seem to acknowledge, that Man alone and of himself is not sufficient for his own Government.

And

And so Experience shews him to be. For in how many Instances does he fail, who only considers himself as cut off from God and the World?

Indeed there is no Consideration of force enough to move a Man but this, that *It is the Will of God*. This one comprizeth all other; And is an Engin so well fitted for humane Nature, that it engages all the Inclinations and Passions, the Faculties and Appetites of which it is made.

To conclude: We see how vain it is to attempt the shaking off all Subjection to God's Government; that could we do it so thoroughly, as not only to lay aside all Regard to God's Will, but also not do any one Thing which he has enjoin'd, we should yet be wholly unmanageable by our selves: And since it is not fit that we should be the sole absolute Governours of our selves, as I hope we shall not give our selves up to the Disposal of any other Man, so we shall think it most highly beseems us to live under God's Government, whose undoubted Right it is to do with his own what he pleases.

The Sum of what I have said under my first Argument, respecting the Excellency and Desirableness of God's Kingdom and Righteousness is this; It is most fit and right, that he who is, undoubted, Lord of Men, and of the World, should be acknowledged and submitted unto by us all. For in this we do but acknowledge his Title unto us, we only do what, by being his Creatures, we

are obliged, it is his due. He also is only fit for the absolute Universal Sovereign Government of Men. No Man who acts not by Vertue of God's Authority, is sufficient for Self-government; much less is he qualified for Sovereignty over others. And Man cannot be without all Government: it is therefore necessarily devolved upon God, who alone has that Wisdom, and Goodness, and Power, which qualifie him for it.

The second Argument relating to our seeking, &c. shewing the Benefits that will flow from it.

I now proceed to the second Argument I propounded, which relates to our seeking it; and shall shew how beneficial it will be, if we and all Men acknowledge the Sovereignty of God, which does of Right belong unto him: and that if we shall submit to every Manifestation of the Divine Will, especially to that which is made by our Saviour, great Advantages will accrue to Men. And this will appear to us whether we consider them singly, or in Societies.

I. If we consider Men singly; Whosoever he be who owns and obeys God's Government, he is hereby freed from the worst of Evils, which otherwise he must necessarily lie under; and is also made wiser and better, more perfect and happy than otherwise he could be.

II. If we consider them in Societies, Universal Acknowledgment of God's Sovereignty, and Subjection to his Laws, is the most compendious and effectual, indeed the only Means to secure human Societies from their com-

common Pests ; and also to make them durable, and peaceful, and profitable.

I. Let us consider Men singly and apart : And here it will appear,

Benefits of
God's Govern-
ment to Men
singly con-
sidered

1. Whosoever lives under the Sense and Acknowledgment of God's Authority, takes the best Course to prevent, or to rid himself of the worst of Evils, viz. the many foolish and dangerous Mistakes of Good and Evil, to which he is otherwise liable.

Though the Wisdom of our Creator has taken sufficient Care, that we should neither be ignorant nor mistaken in the Matter of Good and Evil, yet such has been our Neglect and Abuse of our selves, and of God's Methods, that there is nothing more common in the World, than for Men to call Good, Evil ; and Evil, Good ; which Mistake could never have befallen them so generally, if they had lived under God's Rule. But if they return and submit unto it, certainly they cannot easily fall into gross and fatal Mistakes, or continue notoriously ignorant of *what is Good, and what is Evil.*

God's Govern-
ment frees
Men from
their Mistakes,
and gives them
a right Under-
standing of
Good and
Evil.

He that denies, or forgets God that made him and all Men, may fall into such Mistakes, he may esteem corporal Enjoyments, sensual Gratifications, animal Perfections, and an earthly Felicity above the Spiritual Divine Life, and the Bliss and Satisfaction of a good and vertuous Mind, &c. But he cannot thus err, who considers and regards God.

For, such an one cannot imagin, that Man was framed by God for a meer Animal, for no higher purpose than Sensuality ; or that this should be the utmost issue of all those various Powers with which human Nature is endued, many of which are no way futable nor conducing to such an end.

He cannot think this to be the Will of that Wisdom and Goodness that made us; but must conclude, that He who formed such a thing as Man, and furnished him with such Powers, intended that he should exercise them: And since he created him with such inclinations, that he should pursue them in such manner, as to advance himself to the highest Perfection of which he is capable: And to help forward the well-being of all others ; which, he sees, cannot be done if he take up his rest in Sensuality, and make that his aim.

He that looks no higher than himself, or most other Men with whom he lives, will, I doubt, make himself the measure of all that is good ; and think nothing delirable but as it bears a reference to himself ; And so will discharge himself of all care of, and kindness to others : Nay, will afflict, oppress, and injure them, if this tend to his own advancement and welfare : or he will only carry fair towards others, to whom he perhaps intends evil.

But on the other hand, He that fears God, and has respect to his Will, cannot but think, that he who made all Men, and made them so like, and gave them all Desires and Capacities

precities of being Good and Happy, wills that they should be so: And consequently that every one should set forward each others Happiness: And because of that almost indistinguishable Similitude which there is betwixt Men, that every one should love his Brother as he does himself.

Wherever there is but a tolerably true Notion of God, such as by the meer light of Nature, the well-disposed Heathens have had; it must be granted, that he who owns God and his Sovereignty, has great Advantage above others, to secure his Mind from Mistakes of Good and Evil. But where God has manifested himself and his Will by inspired Persons, and especially by his Son, there every sincerely honest-minded Man is so well secured from gross and dangerous Errors concerning this, that they who lie in wait to deceive, are forced to keep the Gospel from them, or to shew them the Light of it through coloured Glasses: We know whose Arts these are, &c.

But it may be objected, That many *Object.* who have God's Government set up in their Souls, do yet notwithstanding err, and that very dangerously.— I answer,

1. This is the best Course that can be *Answer.* taken to preserve Men from gross and pernicious Errors; not that it will infallibly secure them from all, or from lesser Errors in that Matter.

2. Yet it is to be doubted, how God's Throne is erected in that Soul which falls in to any such Mistakes. For according as

God's Government is more or less received, Men are more or less liable to err in this main Concernment.

3. But whatever are the Misapprehensions of such who do indeed live in the Acknowledgment of God's Sovereignty, and are obedient to what, upon their honest Enquiry, appears to be his Will; I doubt not, they will find Mercy with God, and their Error shall not undo them.

This is the first Advantage that they, who have the Kingdom of God set up in them, are in the best Way to escape the worst, and most mischievous of all Errors, those concerning Good and Evil. I add to this,

It puts them into the right Method of encreasing in all useful Knowledge of what is Good.

2ly. They are in the high Rode to encrease in all good and useful Knowledge.

How often does the Scripture tell us, that *the Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom*: that *his Precepts give Understanding*: that *his Word is a Lamp*: that *they have a good Understanding, who do his Commandments*? If it be so before they do them, it is better afterwards.

For in Morality, Acts as they confirm Habits, so they ever encrease the Principles and Powers from whence they rise: so that if Obedience to the Divine Law proceed from Understanding, it will encrease and better its Principle.

Objection.

If it be objected, that many, who are obedient to the Divine Laws, are yet very ignorant; and that others, who live in the Neglect and Violation of them, are knowing.— I reply.

1. Per-

1. Perhaps neither are the one so ignorant, nor the other so knowing, as they are thought. The Man that fears God, is modest and humble, makes no Shew and Ostentation of his Knowledge; but if fair Occasion be offered, will give Proof of much better, and larger Knowledg than he is supposed to have. And the other vain-glorious Boaster makes a great Noise with an empty Vessel; he has no Check upon him, but without Controul brings forth all his Treasures of Knowledg with, or without Occasion, that he may appear a Learned Man.

2. Nor is all Knowledg to be esteemed so useful and good; there is a great deal which has some Vogue, that is yet trifling and vain; which whosoever has, he is not the wiser or better, nor he that wants it, the worse.

3. I do not say, that by erecting God's Government in the Soul, a Man is immediately possessed of all Knowledg; but this I say, that it is a most excellent Preparation of the Mind for the best Knowledg.

It will help to direct and regulate, to govern and determine the Thoughts so as is most likely to attain this Knowledg. It will incite and engage a Man to the Pursuit of it. It will strengthen and corroborate the Faculty.--- As on the other Hand, Wickedness does corrupt and weaken it. It will prepare the Way for the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation to convey Knowledg into the Soul. And thus in Time, and by Degrees it leads the Soul into all Knowledg. And the con-

trary, tho it may not presently dispossess the Soul of the Knowledg it has, yet it will do it gradually, it has a Tendency to it.

4. He that obeys God, and yet remains ignorant, would have been more ignorant if he had not. On the other Hand, the wicked Man who has, notwithstanding his Wickedness, attained great and good Knowledg, had he been subject to God's Government, would have enlarged and better'd his Understanding.

Thus I have intimated how beneficial a Thing it is to a Man, to have God's Kingdom set up in him in respect of Truth and Knowledg, to which it is very instrumental; which yet is little in comparison of what I have to add: For tho Knowledg be better than all the Riches, and Honours, and Sensuality, which Men so much admire, yet it is far short of Goodness and compleat Happiness.

It endues
them with He-
roic's Vertue
and Goodness.

3. Whosoever lives in the Acknowledgment of God's Sovereignty, and in due Subjection to his Government, must necessarily be of an excellent Spirit, and attain to most Heroick Vertue and Goodness; and that on such accounts as these.

1. This does not only direct to what is good, (as has been shewn) but also is a most unanswerable Argument to perswade us to it; and lays the most forcible Obligation on the Soul, to practise it, that can be. For it no longer appears solliciting us under the single Representation of Good, but comes with Authority, and commands the Soul in
the

the Name of God, whose Will and Law it is. It appears Good not only in our Thoughts, but in the Account of infinite Wisdom. It is the Will of the undoubted Lord of the World, of Love it self; therefore 'tis both Wisdom and Justice that we do it; and certainly Good.

2. This rescues the Soul into Liberty from divers Bonds with which we were fast tied to the World, to our selves, to the Devil. It enables us to shake off all those Fetters: It also brings us out of great Confusion, into good Order, and a regular Course.

3. It begets a Greatness of Mind, and Nobleness of Spirit, whereby a Man is set above the Force of Temptations; the Soul will not stoop so low as to yield to them.

To sum up what has been said: To live in a hearty and Universal Acknowledgment of God's Sovereignty over us, and to own this in the whole Course of our Life, by a constant Regard, and sincere Obedience to all his Commandments, this supposes and imports a good Understanding.

It implies a Perswasion concerning God, that he is greater and better than my self, and all Things else; that the whole World is his; that he is the Lord of Heaven and Earth, &c. Now to be firmly perswaded of this, is no small Attainment; it argues a well-exercised Understanding.

Especially in an Age wherein Atheistic Conceits have been set off with so much Advantage; when Religion and the Belief of a God has been exposed by all the Wit and

and Railery that Profaneness and Sensuality could devise: -- When all sorts of Wick- edness has been commonly practised, may, publicly owned and professed by Men: At such a Time as this, to be unmoved from the Belief of a God, when others renounce him. And to live in Obedience to those Commands of God, which are despised by most, and re- garded by very few: it signifies a clear and a firm Knowledg that cannot be obscured or shaken by so much Opposition. -- Indeed, at all Times that Frame of Mind which is necessarily supposed to a Man's living in an Universal and constant Acknow- ledgment of God's Sovereignty, and Obe- dience to his Commands in the Gospel, must be very excellent. For the Soul that does this, must be above the enchanting Power of sensual and bodily Gratifications. -- He that is Christ's, has crucified the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts. That Soul must have well considered the World, and discerned clearly the Beauty, and Order, and Good- ness of all in it. That Dependency of him- self, and of all other Beings, that he can- not but acknowledg them to come from the most powerful, wise, and good Being; that is, God. Besides, it is an Indication of a sound and healthful State of Soul; that it does approve and like those Things, which are commanded and enjoined in the Go- spel.

In short: Nothing less than a clear Know- ledg, a Largeness, a Greatness of Soul, well exercised Thoughts, a Mind raised above
low

low Inclinations and Appetites, well resolved and fully satisfied; nothing less than a most excellent Spirit can enable a Man to live as becomes a Subject of God's Kingdom, which he has set up by the *Messias*.

So that however inconsidering Men may impute this to Melancholy and want of Wit, they do most grossly mistake. For it is plainly from their own want of Understanding, that themselves do not submit unto it.

Let us set before us a Man, who lives in an Universal Acknowledgment of God's Sovereignty, and is in his whole Life obedient to all the Divine Laws, particularly those which were delivered by our Saviour, who obeys the Gospel: How wise, how good, how holy, how perfect, how happy will this Man appear to every understanding Beholder?

1. We will consider the Wisdom of such an one; and this will be very conspicuous. It endues them with Wisdom.

Moses perswaded the *Israelites*, That they would obey the Statutes which he taught them, from this Argument, That it would be their *Wisdom in the sight of the Nations which should hear of them, and say, Surely this great Nation is a wise and understanding People*; Deut. 4. 6. To have good Laws, is a certain Argument of the Wisdom of the Lawgiver, and a probable one of the Peoples; because it is to be presumed, that they will observe them. But where they both have, and keep them, this is a certain Proof, that both Governours and People are wise.

And

And such is the Excellency of God's Government, which he has set up by Christ, that whosoever obeys the Laws of that Kingdom, will approve himself on all Accounts, a truly wise Man.

For he that in Obedience to the Divine Will, conducts his Life according to the Directions of the Gospel, he shews that he has, and that he lives by the most certain, useful, and excellent Knowledg, that he makes the best Choices, that he designs the highest Ends, and yet such as are very proper and attainable; that he prosecutes these in the diligent Use of sufficient Means; that he employs himself in Matters which are neither too great, nor too little, too high nor too low for him, in such Things as are useful and necessary, excellent, but agreeable; secures himself, promotes his own Interest, acts most for his own Advantage; and is also useful and helpful unto others.

The Man who is, and does thus, will by all be accounted wise.

1. He who out of an Acknowledgment of God's Sovereignty, obeys the Gospel of his Son; he not only has, but lives by the most useful, the most excellent, the most certain Knowledg of God, and of himself.

It is most excellent, because it is about God, and my self; most useful, because it has Influence upon Life, and serves for the Conduct of our whole Practice: It also advances and enobles our Actions, which when they are done in Obedience to God, are of far greater Price than when the same are done in pursuit of of our own

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Inclinations, without Regard to God. It is also most sure, because it is Matter of Experiment and Sense, which gives the greatest Assurance of which we are capable.

He that in those Things, which the Gospel enjoins, serves God, acts accountably; he practises from clear Knowledg and Improvement of his Mind. These are the Principles from which he acts; that what is fit, and just, and honest, is to be prefer'd before any Thing that can stand in Competition with it; that God is, and is the most excellent Being, the Original of all Things; that he preserves all; that every Thing is known by him, and subject unto him; that his Will ought to be complied with so far as it is known, and can be done by us; that he has declared it by Jesus Christ. These and such like are the Principles of that Man, who is subject to God's Kingdom set up by Christ.

Now how evident and accountable these are, will be manifest; especially if we set them in Comparison with the Opposite; *viz.* that any other Thing is to be preferred before that which is fit and right; that there is no God, that he is not most Excellent, that we are not his Creatures, that his Will is not to take place, that he has not made it known to us by Christ. All which are manifestly false: And it's utterly impossible, that any ones Mind could be ascertain'd of them, if they were not false. And they are so evidently the Fruits of Inconsideration, and an unimproved Mind, and
so

so unaccountable, that he who lives according to them, lives the most foolish and mad Life that can be. I can trust every one with this reasoning, tho I do not make it out by particular Instances; therefore I proceed to the next.

2. He makes the best Choices who lives thus. This must be granted, if 1^{ly}. What is spiritual, and belonging to the Mind be more valuable than that which is material, and has Reference to the Body only. 2^{ly}. If those good Things which are stable and durable, be to be preferred before those that are transient and temporary. If immortal Life be more desirable than that which is of short and uncertain Continuance. If, 3^{ly}. the whole Happiness of Man be more eligible than a part.

In these Respects it is, that he who lives in due Subjection to God's Government by Christ, makes the wisest Choices. And he who refuses that God should rule over him, does either prefer his Body before his Mind, and set a greater Value on this perishing Life, than on that which endures for ever; or contents himself with some petty Gratification of some one Appetite, whilst he neglects the rest, and sits down satisfied with an inconsiderable part of Happiness, instead of the whole. Whosoever considers, will need no farther Discourse to convince him, who it is that makes the best Choices.

3. He who obeys Christ Jesus, propounds to himself the highest Ends that are attainable by Man. For he aims at nothing less than

than the most exalted Perfection and compleat Happiness of which he is capable for himself : he seeks for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality. He likewise is endeavouring after the good State of all his Fellow-Creatures : And that which he mainly prosecutes as his last and principal End, is, that God may be glorified, that his Glory may appear to, and be acknowledged by all. And are not these the highest noblest Ends, which the Mind of Man can aim at? Can any Thing greater, or more excellent be designed by the highest Order of Angels, nay, by God himself?

And yet as great as it is, it is attainable. I do not say, that any Men, or that all Men will ever be able to accomplish this ; but this I say, that they can all do something towards the attaining these great Ends; and that God will make use of their fervent Desires, and steady Designation of these Things towards the effecting of them.

And this I also say, That the having these Things in their aim, will be of extraordinary Advantage, for the Improvement of all their Faculties to their utmost Perfections, and for the raising of themselves above the Condition of all those, who are either of no, or of little, or of ill Designs.

And consequently, they will be more enabled to do good to others. And the Glory of that God from whom they receive all, will shine more illustriously.— This leads me to the next Argument of their Wisdom, which is this :

4. They

4. They prosecute these Ends in the use of sufficient, of suitable, and of likely Means. By living such a Life as the Gospel requires; by the sober and good Government of their bodily Passions and Inclinations; by Truth and Faithfulness; Justice and Honesty; Mercy and Kindness; Meekness and Condescension; Peaceableness and Humanity in their Conversation, and Carriage towards others: By their inward and fervent Devotions, their Spiritual Worship and all-becoming Acknowledgments of God; they take the most direct and ready course to profit themselves, and do the best they can, and that which will have some effect toward the bettering the state of others; and it is the very method prescribed by our Saviour himself, that God may be glorified. For, says he, *Let your Light so shine before Men, that they seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in Heaven.*

I suppose I have said enough to prove the Wisdom of that Man who lives under that Government which God has set up by Christ. Other Particulars I leave to further consideration.

It makes them good, useful, and profitable.

2. I next proceed to shew, how good such a Man is, *i. e.* useful, profitable, beneficial. This also is a singular Fruit of Wisdom, and the surest Demonstration of it, — that without which, Wisdom loses its value, its name.

It is the top, the fruit, the excellency of Wisdom, that it is beneficial: But consider it under what Notion you will, he that is use-

useful and serviceable, merciful and kind to other Men, is by all accounted, is emphatically called a good Man.

Now whosoever obeys that Will of God, which he has manifested by Christ, must excel in Goodness. For he loves, and does Good to all, to Strangers, to Enemies, to the Wicked; there is no Bar to his Kindness: it is like the Rays of the Sun that penetrate into every Place; *Nothing*, saies the *Psalmist*, *is hid from the Heat thereof*. There is no Cottage, no Prison, no Dungeon, whither this Man's Goodness does not reach; no Condition in which any of God's Creatures can be in, which it does not offer at some help.

Take a little View of such an one, who is brought under the Government of God, observe his Temper and Behaviour. He bears Good-will unto all, heartily desires, daily prays, that all Men may be happy; has no secret Wishes of any ones Misery; he does not stay in good Desires and Prayers for others Welfare, but does what in him lies to promote it.

He lays hold on every Opportunity, uses his best Skil, his utmost Care and Industry, to set forward the Perfection and Happiness of every other Man. Whatever Difficulty, Opposition, or Discouragement he meets with in the Way of good doing, he is not hindred by it, he passes over it.

He will inform Ignorance, satisfy Doubts, rectify Mistakes, strive with Waywardness, help to allay Heats, to subdue and regulate Passions. Nor will he only give Counsel to

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those that want it, but Money also if he have it, and if it be not already laid out, or design'd for better Uses. In what Kind and Way soever he can, he will afford help to those that need it, be they who they will, tho none of his Kindred, or Friends, or Acquaintance, but Foreigners; nay, tho they hate him, he will love them; and tho they be Enemies to God, and all that is Good, yet he will pity and endeavour to reclaim them.

Such is he who lives under God's Government. All that have informed themselves of the Laws of Christ's Kingdom, know, that this is the Temper and Carriage to which they direct and oblige us.

Now then, if it be desirable to be (in this Sense) a good Man; if it be desirable, that all Men on Earth should be good; then is it desirable, that I, that all Men should become obedient to these Laws; and that the Government which he has erected by Christ, should be owned and submitted unto by us all.

It makes them
holy in all
manner of
Conversation

3. Consider in the next place, how holy must such a Man be in all manner of Conversation? He that in all he does, makes such Acknowledgment of God's Sovereignty, that he will not do any Thing, which he knows God has forbid; and will do all that God has commanded in the Gospel; how holy will he be in all his Works? not only those which he does before Men, and in the Face of the Sun, but in those that no Eye, except that of Heaven, sees. When he is in his Closet, in the privatest Place, and in Dark-

Darkness, he will not allow himself in any unholy Action.

Nor will he only do no Evil, but not so much as Ipeak any. No prophane Oaths, Curses, or Blasphemies; no Slanders, false Accusations, uncharitable Defamations, nor Detractions; no Railing, Scurrilous, Abusive, Scoffing, Scornful, Taunting, Jeering; no obscene or filthy Ribaldry shall be heard from him; he will set a Watch over the door of his Mouth, that he offend not with his Tongue.

But above all keeping, he keeps his Heart, that is his first and chief Care, to wash that from Wickedness, to mortifie his evil Lusts and Affections, to forsake his sinful Thoughts. He knows, that he is required to purifie himself from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, to be sanctified throughout, to be inwardly, throughly, universally pure and holy. And (as I have intimated before) Vertue and Holiness is greatly advantaged by this.

1. In that it does not assault the Soul with its own single Force, nor allures it only with its native Beauty and intrinsic Goodness; but is farther assisted by that most powerful Consideration of the Divine Will.

Now there cannot be a more forcible Argument offered to the Mind of Man, than this; God wills it; God requires and enjoins it. For here are infinite Wisdom and Goodness, and Power in Conjunction. And if these were not sufficient to perswade, here is the most undoubted Sovereign Authority that enjoins.

H h 2

Thus

Thus is the Soul vanquished by this Consideration : this virtuous Action is not only agreeable to my Nature, consonant to my Reason, sutable to my Inclination, tending to my Perfection; but it is also that to which the Wisdom that made me and all the World, does direct me; that which is according to that Good-will by which I live, and on which I depend for all the Good which I have, or hope for. It is the Will of him that has all Power in Heaven and Earth; the Edict, the Law of the only Supreme rightful Governour of Men and Angels, of the whole World.

So then it amounts to this : If any Man does not that which he knows is the Will of God, he leaves the Conduct of Wisdom and Goodness, and consequently abandons himself to Folly and Mischief : he relinquishes the Protection of Almighty Power, and betakes himself to Weakness and Impotency; he incurs the Crimes of highest Ingratitude to his best Benefactor, and of Rebellion against the Sovereign Lord of all.

2. The Soul that is brought into God's Kingdom, or in whom God's Kingdom is, is rescued from the Slavery and Bondage in which it was before. Time was when it served other and divers Lords; the Devil, Men, Self were set up as Supreme; and vain Imaginations, ill Reasonings, false Opinions, exorbitant Appetites, irregular Wills, inordinate Desires, were their Ministers. But now all these are either wholly cast out, or reduced into Order.

All

All that can be brought into Subjection to God's Government, is; and that which cannot, but stands in eternal Opposition and Defiance to it, is laid aside; even Self is abased, and has given up its Claims to God, whose Right it is.

And whatever is suffered by the Soul, must now be subject to God, and make Acknowledgment to him. It is now no longer distracted betwixt love of Ease and Honour, of Wealth and Pleasure: But these, and all other Appetites are brought into Submission to the Will of God.

And a Man himself being wholly resigned up to God, discharges himself of all other Cares, but the doing of the Will of God; is no longer concern'd to do this or that, further than as they are Instances of Obedience to the Divine Law.

How perfect a Liberty this is, may be apprehended in part from what has been said, but cannot be understood fully by any, but those that feel it.

And when the Soul is set at this Liberty, and has shak'd off those Fetters with which it was tied, it will then, (as the *Psalmist* expresses it) *run in the Ways of God's Commandments*: When not only devilish and brutish, but worldly Affections and Appetites are subdued, and God is exalted in the Soul, and Love and Regard to him bears sway; then will arise an earnest desire to please him, to do his Will, and to be like him: This will be the Seed of Vertue, and a most powerful Principle of holy Life.

3. This brings along with it such a Greatness of Mind, and Nobleness of Soul, as sets it above the Force of Temptation. How, saies it, can I do such a Thing, or any Thing whatsoever, wherein I shall sin against God?

A Man that is doing the Will of God, is about so good and great a Work, and has so good Reason for it, that it is scarce imaginable how he should be taken off from it, much less engaged in the contrary. If the Devil or the World, if Friends, if Self, his own Body or Humour offer to divert him to something else, he will return the same Answer our blessed Saviour did to his Mother; *Wist you not*, saies he, *that I must be about my Father's Business?* So will the Soul that is in God's Kingdom say to every Solicitation, every Desire that would be gratified, I must obey the Will of God, I must do his Work.

It advances
them to the
Perfection of
human Nature.

4. This is the Perfection of human Nature in its most exalted State: In general, it is the utmost Issue of all the Improvements of our highest Faculties, to acknowledg God's Sovereignty, and submit our selves to his Disposol.

For let us be supposed to know as much as human Understanding can reach unto, it will lead hither. For the better we know our selves, the more we shall perceive our dependant precarious State, the more sensible we shall be of our Deviations from, and Obligations to our great Creator and Preserver: And the fuller and clearer Discovery we have of the World, the more clearer shall

we

we discern the eternal Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness of the Original of it.

And this Knowledg will make us admire and adore him, who is the first Cause of all Life and Being; we cannot but love him with the greatest Love, and fear him above all; and we shall be not only willing, but desirous to be at his dispose; and shall most heedfully observe every Intimation of that Good-will which gave Being to us, and to the whole World.

Thus in general we see whatever Improvements are made by our highest Faculties, they all issue in this, yielding up our selves to God's Government: When he shall have crowned us with Glory, we shall throw down those Crowns at his Feet.

The highest Orders of Angels are described to us, as acknowledging the glorious Excellencies of the most high God, and his Supreme Authority in deepest Humility; and as in constant Attendance on him, and readiness to do his Pleasure.

Indeed this is the most that we know of the State of Heaven, that the Will of God is there done, as our Saviour has taught us. It is done universally, in Perfection, cheerfully, incessantly, eternally. This is the great Difference betwixt the earthly, and the heavenly State. In the one God's Will is done very imperfectly and unconstantly, by Fits, and by Halves; our own Wills are set up and obeyed. But in the other State, our Wills are wholly swallowed up in the Will of God, and are continually subject unto it:

Hh 4

And

And that is done without Weariness, without Intermiſſion or End.

Nor is any greater Perfection conceivable by us : For our Minds cannot determine them thus to Action from a higher Principle, from a better Reason than this, that it is the Will of God we should do thus. This includes all Reasons, and every Motive that may induce us to Action.

For if it be the Will of God, it is holy, wise, and good ; it is honourable, pleasant, safe ; it is our Life and our Joy ; all that is desirable by us ; the Compliance with it, is a grateful and just Return for what we have received ; the best Way to preserve what we yet want, and to secure what we have.

To conclude this Reasoning : If God be so wise, that he best knows what is the Perfection of his Creature ; and so good, that he most desires it : we must necessarily conclude that to be our best, and most exalted State, when we act by the Direction of his Counsel, and live in Obedience to his Will : For it is that Counsel and that Will, by which all Things were first made, and are preserved ; and by which alone they must be brought to their utmost Perfection.

The Sum is ; He in whom God's Kingdom is set up, is wise and good, holy and perfect : And according as it is more or less erected and obeyed by any Man, by so much he has more or less of these Excellencies. In Heaven where God's Sovereignty is fully acknowledged, where all submit unto it, there they are as wise and pure, as good, and
in

in as great Perfection as is possible. But here on Earth where God's Laws are imperfectly obeyed, and his Authority not so fully own'd and submitted unto, we are far from Perfection.

Indeed all good Reasons of any Undertaking are included in, and do resolve themselves into this, it is the Will of God. For Instance, Do we act because such a Thing is good and fit in general? Because it is agreeable to our natural Inclination, it is profitable to us, and tends to our Perfection? Or because it is beneficial to other Men, and for the good of the World? Why all this is comprised in those Words; This God wills.

And this is a most certain Way to know what God's Will is, by discerning the Fitness, the Usefulness, the Goodness of any Thing. For we cannot but judge, that all is Good which God wills, and that he wills all that is Good.

Now for a Man to do any Work because he thinks it is Good, and to lay aside all Consideration of God's Will and Government in the doing it, this is to forget that he is God's Subject; it is to separate those Considerations which ought to go together; it is to rob God of that Acknowledgment and Homage, which is his Due.

Unless I be habitually perswaded, that all Good is of God, and according to his Will; and unless I do often actually think thus, tho I may do that which is Good, I do not well; I do not this Good in Obedience to
the

the Divine Will as I ought, but only in Compliance with mine own.

For tho I do a Thing on this Account, because it is Good ; and upon a clear Understanding that it is Good, yet if I do it not in Obedience to God, and with an inward Acknowledgment of his Government, this Action is not so good, nor does it proceed from so good, so right and valuable a Principle, as, if I did it in Obedience to God, it would. He that does his Master's Work, and with respect to his Master's Command, does better, and acts more as becomes a Servant, than he who does the same meerly because himself approves it, and without all Regard to his Masters Will : So he that does that which is Good, in Compliance with the Divine Will, does much better than he who does the same Good, but without respect unto God.

Besides all this, the Greatness and Excellency of this Principle of Action, may appear on these four Accounts, which I shall but name.

The Greatness
and Excellency
of this Principle
of Action.
It best be-
comes us.

1. Such an Acknowledgment of God's Sovereignty over us, best becomes us. For what can be more becoming those that live in continual Dependance on God's Will for all they are and have, than to acknowledg this in a most humble Subjection, and an hearty and universal Obedience unto it?

It secures us
from Error.

2. Then are we safe when we act under the Influence of this Principle.

Not that we shall be hereby infallibly secured from all Error (tho it will do much to-

towards that, there being no such Antidote against Mistake, as a Resolution to do God's Will) but it will preserve from the greatest Mischief which Error does, *viz.* the hindring our Obedience ; and that it does by taking us off from that which was the first, and is still the most powerful Principle of Sin, our own Will.

So long as I comply with, and act from mine own Will as my highest Principle, so long I do not obey nor own God. Nay, tho I may happen to will the same that God does, yet if I do it in Compliance with mine own Will, without greater Regard to God's, I am off from the Principle of Obedience, and act very unsafely : And when God's Will and mine shall part (as they must some Time or other) I shall then by following mine own Will, fall into Sin.

On the other hand ; Where the Divine Will and mine own concur, if I still look upon God as my Sovereign, and do every Thing not so much because I will it, as because God commands it, I take a safe Course. And so long as I do thus, tho I chance to mistake in some Matters, yet I shall preserve my self from a disobediential Temper.

3. This Consideration inforces every Argument, and adds to every Reason that can move me to act. Suppose that I my self, that other Men think such a Thing good, and I am enclined from hence to do it ; is it not much more than all this ? And ought it not much more to sway me, that God judges so ?

It inforces every other Argument.

Again ;

Again ; I will, or others would have me do a Thing ; but is not the Will of God a much more forcible, and better Reason than either mine own, or other Mens ?

Whatever comes to me under the Notion of Homage and Subjection to God, it must carry away my Consent irresistably, as being just and holy, wise and good : that which implies whatever can move me to act.

It commands
in chief.

4. This Consideration is to command in chief, to govern, to check, and controul all others ; whatever stands in Competition with it, ought to give it place ; tho it were the greatest Good, the best Reason in my Apprehension, yet here it must yield ; tho it were my Life (which I desire by all means may be preserved) I must give that up a Sacrifice to the Divine Will, following the Example of our blessed Lord.

From what has been said, does sufficiently appear, that there is no Principle of Action so great as this ; and consequently that it leads unto Perfection. But I shall still make this more evident by what I shall add, As,

It is the most
vigorous Prin-
ciple of Acti-
vity.

1. This is a most vigorous Principle of Activity. And this is observed by all, that the Faculties of our Souls are improved and carried on to Perfection by nothing so much as by Exercise and Action. On the contrary, that they are lessened and impaired, and will in time be endanger'd to be lost for want of it.

Now then, that which imployes them, does mightily befriend them : And that this does
so,

so, appears inasmuch as the Thing to which we are determined by our Subjection to God's Government, appears to us not only good, but just ; and not only as fit, but necessary ; we do not think that it may, but that it should and must be done.

Whilst we look on our selves as wholly at our own Disposal, our Natures are not so determin'd to that which is Good, but we can easily dispense with our selves, tho we do not this or that, which we know to be Good : But when we know it to be the Will of God, and that we are to be subject and govern'd by that Will, we cannot then take upon us to acquit our selves of the Obligation to do it.

We do, or at least, we imagine we do know, the utmost Reason of what our selves will ; but we never do, nor can pretend to understand all the Reasons of the Divine Will. We cannot think, that we comprehend all that moved the unsearchable Wisdom of God to require such a Thing of us, therefore we can never think fit to neglect it, because there are we do not know what Reasons for the doing of it. And there is always this Reason, That it is the Law of our Sovereign, the Will of God, which we have no Authority, and therefore must not take upon us to abrogate, or but relax.

Thus if we live in Universal Subjection to God's Government, and in all our Ways acknowledg his Sovereignty, we shall be under some Necessity and Constraint to act : We cannot set our selves loose from the
Obli-

Obligation, as we may where we own no Superior. Moreover I observe,

This Activity
will be Uni-
versal,

1. That the Activity to which we are incited by this Principle, will be Universal, Soul and Body, all the Powers of the one, and Parts of the other will be employed; because all is God's, and under his Rule; we cannot think any Part of our selves, any Action that we do, exempt from his Government: And by this means every Thought of our Heart will be brought into Subjection.

Constant, and
lasting.

2. It will be constant and lasting. We shall not think the Service of God to be confined to any Place, or Time, or Action, but that it is to be extended to all, to be every where, and alway. No Time wherein we shall look on our selves at liberty from doing the Will of God; in our secular Affairs, in our Diversions and Gratifications, we shall still pay our Allegiance to Heaven.

There is no other Principle; I know, that has such an Universal, and so constant an Influence on us to put us upon Action; neither Regard to any, to all Men, nor Self-respect. For there are some Actions which neither of these will be able to determine us to, as the laying down our Lives in the Defence of the Religion of Christ. And many other Things that are done when no Eye sees, and when our own Inclinations carry us from them; nay, and our very Reasons that respect our selves, would not determine us to them.

Add

Add to this : Whatsoever is a Principle of Perfection, must be stable and firm : For if it be easily shaken and alterable, it cannot be of any such Use as to perfect us.

Now nothing but Reason, and what belongs to the Mind, can be thus firm : Whatsoever is of the Body, must change ; and there is no Principle of Action that is in our Minds more unalterable than this, That the Law of God is to be obeyed, God's Will is to be done.

3. It will also be a Principle of Regular Activity. This will do that which nothing else can ; it will bring Order into, and amongst our various Appetites, and manifold Faculties. Regular.

Sin first brought Confusion into our Natures : and so long as we continue disobedient unto God, we shall be in Disorder ; our several Inclinations will be without Check, and so will clash and interfere with each other. But when God's Authority is submitted unto, they will all keep their Places.

As an Army without their General, or a State without its Supreme lawful Governour ; such a Thing would human Nature be without God. Were it not for a Sense of his Sovereignty, every Appetite and Passion would be perking up. But where this takes Place, it curbs them, and suppresses those Tumults which would otherwise arise.

The Soul is now quiet, because that Principle which ought to be uppermost, is so : Whereas if any other Sovereign be set up, besides him whose Right it is, the Reason of the

the Mind is unsatisfied, and opposes it self to his Rule. If a Man set up himself in chief, Reason will controul this, and tell him, that he usurps the Place of God, and ought to be subject to God; which when he is, and comes under God's Government, then all is quiet.

The inferior Faculties are now determined by a Will, that is guided by the Understanding; and the Understanding it self is instructed in an easie and a very attainable Knowledge. For such is that concerning the Will and Law of God; there being nothing almost required besides Desire of Truth, and Attention to what is in, and before every Man.

To conclude this Particular: Whilst divers Lusts and Pleasures, various Appetites and Affections command in chief, there is nothing but Irregularity and Disorder in the Soul. But when God's Government is set up, when his Will is acknowledged as Supreme, this does unite all the various Inclinations, and sets the Faculties their several Stations; and by subjecting them all to their one Lawful Sovereign, reconciles them unto each other, and makes a good Agreement and Accord amongst them all.

This will introduce Uniformity, Simplicity, Oneness into our Life. Our Actions being all done from this one Principle, and in Obedience to God's Will, they will harmonize and fute, they will be all of a Piece, and there will be an exact Accord and Consent amongst them; which either cannot at all,

or

or can very hardly be any other Way, as whosoever tries will find, and may sufficiently appear from what has been said. So much for the first Particular : This is a most vigorous Principle of Activity, universal, constant, and regular.

2. It engages us in the Use of Understanding in every Thing we do : For we shall endeavour after the Knowledge of God's Will : We shall always have our Thoughts about us, and an actual Consideration both of the Divine Will, and of the Fitness of our Subjection unto it.

It engages us |
in the use of |
our Minds in |
every Thing |
we do.

Now to be thus constant in the Exercise of our Minds, must be a great Improvement of them, and of all other Faculties which are better'd and enlarged by the Encrease of Understanding, and the farther Attainment of Knowledge ; which the Apostle does suppose. when he bids them to *add to their Faith Vertue, and to Vertue Knowledge, &c.* And so does St. Paul, when he prays for the *Philippians, that their Love might abound more and more in all Knowledge, and in all Judgment.*

3. It also hereby secures us from Temerity and Precipitancy in our Undertakings and Actions. For when we consider whether what we are to do, be according to the Will of God, and take care to be obedient to his Law, we cannot very hastily enterprize any Thing.

It secures us |
from Rash- |
ness.

Now that which prevents Rashness in our Actions, does mightily befriend our Understandings, and encrease our Prudence, and consequently tends to our Perfection.

It enlarges
our Thoughts

4. He who acts under the Influence, and by the Conduct of this Principle, must needs have great Largeness of Heart, and take in a mighty Compass in his Thoughts : For so he does, who in all that he does, takes heed unto himself according to what God has manifested to be his Will.

He considers what by Nature and Reason, and what by other Revelations has been declared to be the Will of God. And when he is to act, he compares his Actions with that their Rule. He weighs well the Substance, the Circumstances of them, and their several References and Tendencies.

The Man that acts in acknowledgment of the Divine Authority over him, has God himself, and others, nay, the World in his Thoughts, which must needs cause a Greatness and Largeness of Heart : whereas he who gives up himself to the Gratification of an Appetite ; or who only lives to himself, looks no farther than that Inclination, and considers nothing besides himself ; which, as it proceeds from, so it must necessarily issue in Littleness and Narrowness of Soul.

It proceeds
upon Con-
viction and Evi-
dence.

5. He that in Acknowledgment of his Subjection to God, obeys the Gospel, acts from great Conviction and Evidence. He is well perswaded, that it is fit, and that it is best for him to do thus ; it carrying such a Stamp of Divine Authority upon it, he cannot doubt it to be God's Will : And when he is satisfied in that, he is carried to it with full sail. But when he does it, he has a full Assurance of Understanding, that it is God's Will,

Will, and therefore the best Thing he can do. And this will answer every Objection, and bear down all Opposition: whatever Doubt or Scruple may arise in the Soul concerning the Wisdom, the Goodness, the Fitness of what is to be done, is all fully satisfied, when once it appears to be God's Will. This one Consideration over-rules all others, and carries the Soul along with it.

6. This leads to the Pleasure of the Soul that lives in this Acknowledgment of God's Right to govern him; and this Pleasure is both an Argument of the Perfection which he attains, who acts from this Principle, and an Help to more: It is also a Part of his Happiness. Two Things are here to be done: 1st. To shew that Pleasure will be consequent on our Obedience to God's Will revealed in the Gospel. 2^{ly}. That this Pleasure is both an Effect and Cause of Perfection, and a principal Part of Happiness.

It leads to the Pleasure and Perfection of the Soul.

I. He that heartily owns God's Sovereignty, by governing himself in all his Ways according to the Divine Will, must feel great Pleasure. This will appear,

1. If we consider, that his Faculties are invigorated, he acts with Life and Power (as I have already said). Now this is the very Nature and Essence of Pleasure: It either is, or is inseparable from the vigorous Exercise of any Faculty. But that is not all. For

2. Here are the highest of all human Faculties exercised, and his principal Appetites and Inclinations gratified and complied with; the Understanding is exercised, and the Appetites of what is fit, and just, and right, is satisfied: the Want of which does so imbitter the greatest sensual Pleasure.

3. All the other Inclinations and desires in human Nature, which might otherwise thwart and interfere with these, are quieted and composed, and brought into Subjection, and Subordination unto them. Love of Pleasure, or of Honour amongst Men, or of whatever else is swallowed up by the Desire of doing the Will of God, and are all made subject unto that.

4. I approve my self in what I do; and Self-approbation is so great and necessary an Ingredient to all Pleasure, that without this, nothing can be very grateful unto Man: The want of this will sour and imbitter all other Joys. But on the other Hand; where this is, where a Man is satisfied with himself, it will make him pleas'd with almost every Condition; especially, if it be in Conjunction with (as it cannot well be parted from) a Perswasion,

5. That he is also approved by God. Now this is an overflowing Spring of Delights to the Soul. If I think that I am accepted of God, this will fill my Soul with Joy: I am then free from all those secret Sorrows which arise from Sense of Guilt, and Fear of Condemnation: I am freed of all anxious Thoughts concerning my self, and how it shall

shall be with me; I am full of hope, that I shall be brought to that good State, which I desire so earnestly, that I shall be made Partaker of a blessed Immortality.

This may give some little Account of those ineffable Pleasures which he has, who lives under God's Government, and is willingly subject unto it. But it is impossible to express in Words the Delight of such an one in any Proportion to what he feels.

No, assuredly he who has this Testimony from his Conscience, that in all Things he lives honestly; that he takes heed to all his Ways, and has principal Respect unto all God's Laws: He has so great a Joy flowing in upon him from a Sense, that he pleases God; and is so fully satisfied in, and with himself, that all the Pleasures besides, are but painted lifeless Things, meer Shadows, and faint Resemblances, if compared with these, which are so intense and pure, and near, and constant, and durable, and fresh.

II. This Pleasure is both an Effect and Cause of Perfection. However some feculent, uncertain, mixt, fading Pleasures may be the Consequents of some Actions, that are far from either being, or tending to our Perfection, yet they are of a very different Nature from those which I have now described; which, wherever they are, they are certain Signs of great Perfection. They arise from it; they also tend to it. For they preserve and encrease it; Man being by

ture inclined to do that which is pleasant to him. Now therefore when the Philosopher says, That *Pleasure doth profit* ; I put this Sense on his Words ; That as the Perfection of any Faculty issues in Pleasure, so that very Pleasure does, by disposing us to a repetition of that Act, preserve and increase the Perfection.

I need not to offer any Proof, that Pleasure is Part of our Happiness, we all believe it.

Thus I have shew'd in General, That to live in an hearty Acknowledgment of God's Government over us, and to be subject and obedient unto it, is our Perfection.

This would more fully appear, if we would take a particular Survey of the Laws, whereby God governs the Subjects of his Kingdom, which are written in the Gospel, the Laws of Meekness and Humility, Temperance and Patience, Justice and Charity, of Love to God, and Submission to his Disposal, &c.

If we take a View of all the Divine Laws, and then consider our human Nature, we should discern a Conformity to them, to be our highest Perfection : And that all the best Improvements of our highest Faculties must issue in such Practices at last ; that if they do not, they will fall so much short of Perfection.

Nay, whosoever weighs these Things, will discover that very Action, which is not done in Obedience to God, and is not conformable to these Laws, argues Defect, and Imperfection

fection in its Principle; and that its Tendency is to corrupt human Nature. The Truth of both these Assertions will be very evident to any Man that will consider the Principles, and the Tendencies of Men's Actions.

I will only add, that by owning God's Sovereignty in our hearty Obedience to the Gospel-precepts, we take a sure Way to entitle ourselves to the Divine Protection and Bounty, to all the best Things which the Goodness of God vouchsafes unto Men; not only Health, and Riches, and Honour, and whatever we call the Blessings of this Life, but an happy Resurrection, and Immortal Life hereafter.

It entitles us
to God's Pro-
tection and
Bounty.

If we suppose these Things in God's Hand, (as we must, if we either think like Christians or considering Men) on whom can we imagine that he will confer them, but on such as are his Loyal Subjects, who obey his Commands, and use all that they receive from him as he directs? According to all the Discoveries which God has made of himself, and of his governing the World: This owning him as our Lord, and subjecting our Wills to his, is the likeliest, the only Way to secure unto our selves the good Things of this, and the other Life.

As for the future Bliss, it is not doubted who shall partake of it. And for the good Things of this State, *Godliness has the Promise* of it. Godliness, *i. e.* the Christian Life.

And our Saviour, who has *all Power in Heaven and Earth*, and all Things are in his Hand, has directed his Followers to take the Course to secure themselves of Supplies for their Bodies Food and Raiment, *viz. first to seek the Kingdom of God*; which if they do, he has assured them, that *all these Things shall be added to them*.

We question not but God will give eternal Life to all that obey the Gospel: And can we doubt whether he will bestow upon them the necessary Supports, nay, the Conveniences of this Life so far as he sees good for them? And I hope we will not desire them any farther: if we do, we are not qualified as our Saviour here requires. For our own Wills are uppermost, they are not yet brought into Subjection unto God's: we do not in the first place *seek his Kingdom and Righteousness*; and consequently are not within the Compass of the Promise: when we are, it shall be punctually made good unto us. The good Governour of the World will not fail to protect and provide for his loyal and obedient Subjects.

The Sum of what I have said, is, That he who does indeed give up himself entirely to God's Conduct, obeying all his Laws, particularly those which he has given us by his Son, he has already attain'd to a good Degree of Perfection, and is in the ready Way to be as perfect as human Nature can be. So that to live thus, may well be call'd our Perfection, both as it is a principal Part of and an effectual Means to it. No Man cal
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do thus, who has not first attain'd to some Degree of Perfection : he must have well consider'd himself, and the World, and God ; he must have his Passions and Appetites in good Order ; he must have a well-informed and an exercised Understanding, and a well-regulated Will, who lives in Obedience to the Laws of God's Kingdom. And the more he brings himself into Subjection unto God, the more conformable he is to the Law of Christ, the more he will encrease in all Knowledge and Wisdom, in all that which is the Goodness, the Perfection, the Excellency of human Nature.

For whatsoever is true, is seemly and venerable, or just, or pure, or lovely, or of good Report, or vertuous ; whatsoever is valued and honour'd amongst Men ; whatsoever is commendable and Praise-worthy, we shall certainly do it, if we be Doers of the Will of God.

Nor is there any Thing excellent, which by our Obedience to God, we shall not attain. It is either preparatory to, or will be consequent on our Obedience, we shall be directed, or incited, instigated, nay, even compell'd, we shall one Way or other be brought to it.

Whosoever considers what has been said, ^{It removes all} will discover, that the putting a Man's self ^{Obstructions} under this Government of God, and being ^{to our Perfection.} wholly determin'd by his Will, is of great Efficacy for the Removal of the great Opposites, and Obstruction to our Perfection. Such I account these : 1. To be unemploy'd
and

and unactive. 2. Confusion and Disorder; Irregularity and Tumult amongst his Faculties and Appetites, his Passions and Thoughts. 3. Ignorance and Inconsideration; Slowness of Understanding, and Unreadiness of Thoughts. 4. Haste and Rashness in our Undertakings. 5. Scrupling and Doubtfulness; Unsatisfiedness and Wavering; which produces Distractedness and Inconstancy; great Anxiety and Unquietness. 6. Narrowness and Littleness of Mind, Contractedness of Spirit, a strait Compass of Thoughts. 7. Trouble and inward Dissatisfaction, Vexation and Anguish. This is directly opposite to that Satisfaction and Pleasure which accompanies Perfection. These are all great Hinderances of, and Enemies to Man's Perfection.

By what has been said, appears, how by being subject to God, and taking heed to our Ways according to his Will, these Mischiefs, which are the Companions and Causes of our Imperfection, are taken away.

God's Will is
our Perfection.

And that this is a mighty help to us against not only these which I have here named, but against whatever else would keep us in our imperfect low Estate, will be very evident from this one Consideration, *viz.* That God's Will is our Perfection.

That this is most true, will not be questioned by any, who thinks that God made us, and that he is wise and good. For if so, he will certainly design, *i. e.* will our Perfection: And if he wills that, he wills all that is in order to it. And then we may be
sure,

sure, that if we follow the Counsel, and live under the Conduct of his Will, it must lead us to Perfection.

We are afraid to put our selves out of our own, into God's Hands: we do not think, that we are so safe, that we shall be so well cared for by any, as by our selves. We cannot think, that any intends us so well, and will do us so much good, as we design, and would do for our selves; when, alas! nothing is more evident, than that we neither understand, nor are sufficient for our selves. We neither know what the Good is which we should do, nor are we able to do it, if we did know it. But God fully understands, and heartily wills, and can easily do all that we desire and want, and whatever tends to our Perfection and Happiness.

He thus provides for, and takes care of Creatures that are inferiour to us, and brings them to the State of their utmost Perfection, (as our Saviour argues) why then should we distrust him, as to us Men, the Children of Men, to whom he has always expressed his singular Favours.

Let us not doubt, but that Good-will of his, which gave us our Beings, and has thus long preserved us, and carried us thus far towards the perfect State, will not leave us in the imperfect, but will raise us to the height of it.

This assuredly he will do, if we comply with, and be obedient to his Commands, *i. e.* if we will not resist, nor neglect that Good-will of his, which is our Perfection.

Let

Let us therefore lay aside all jealous suspicious Thoughts of God, and come under his Government, resigning up our Wills intirely to his—— Let us not imagine, that hereby we shall become less perfect and happy, since it is so plain, that this is the perfect Way, the Way that leads to, and is it self our highest Perfection.

What I have said, may be comprised in this one Argument.

The Sum of
this Argument,
considering
Men singly and
apart.

Whatsoever has such an Influence upon us, as to engage us in a diligent, vigorous, constant, regular Use of all our Powers, and particularly our Understanding ; That which will mitigate, and in some sort necessitate our living in Knowledg, and with Attention ; that which will secure us from Rashness and Haste ; which will occasion Largeness of Heart, and a great Compass of Thoughts ; that which will carry us on, and help us to proceed with full Assurance of Understanding, and fill our Souls with Satisfaction and Pleasure ; that which over and above all this entitles us to, and engages the Divine Goodness, which will bestow on us both in this, and in the other Life, whatever is in order to our Perfection and best State, that we may account our Perfection.

Now, that an owning and submitting to God's Government, which he has erected by Christ, will have these Effects, is, I hope, plain to every one, who considers what has been said. And who is perswaded, that whatsoever does put a Man on the best use of himself, or on doing the best, and in
the

the most perfect manner he can act, does withal lead him to Perfection. He who puts himself under God's Government, and resolves to do his Will, he does thus ; He lays a Necessity on himself of doing the best he can.

He that has God in his Thoughts, and considers his Will, must certainly think that which is best, and most excellent. For this is undoubtedly most agreeable to the Will of the wisest and best Mind, *i. e.* he that acts thus, has those Things before his Thoughts, which will raise and enoble his Faculties, and carry them on to their highest Perfection.

I will now proceed to shew what in the second place I propounded, *viz.* That living in subjection to God's Government, will have a very good Influence on Men in their social Capacities ; and that by this most excellent Advantages will accrue to Societies and States ; as,

Benefits of
God's Govern-
ment to Men,
considered as
Members of
Society.

1. Whosoever lives under this Government, he will abstain from all those Practices which are the Bane of Conversation ; which disturb and tend to dissolve all Society — Such are Riotous Living, Drunkenness, all sorts of Injustice, wronging Men of their Goods, whether by Fraud or Violence, and (that which is a Mixture of brutish Sensuality and Injustice) Adultery, all going to unlawful Beds, Lying, Slandering, Scurrility, or any abusive Speech or Carriage, Rebellion against Authority, speaking evil of Governours, disobedient to their lawful Commands.

Abstinence
from all Pra-
ctices that di-
sturb or dis-
solve Society.

These

These and such like are the very Pests of all Societies, the great Disturbers of our Peace. But he who puts himself under God's Government, cannot allow himself in any of these Things; they are so directly contrary to all the Declarations which God has made of his VVill, that he must be a most open notorious Breaker of the Divine Law, who does live in such Things as These.

Those who had only the Light of Nature, could not but discern from our very Make, that our great Creator intended us to live in Society: And that therefore he would not will, that we should do those Things which are destructive of all Society: Such the Things mentioned most apparently are. For,

Some of these Things pull up the very Foundations of Society; as Rebellion against—Disobedience unto—Reviling of Governours; and all Lying. Others make Societies hurtful or useless; as Injustice, Adultery, and Drunkenness; as it makes a Man unuseful to himself, so to others also. Too often he is quarrellous and abusive in his VVords or Actions. All these Things make Company undesirable, and either to ill Purposes, or to none at all.

Subduing
those Appe-
tites which
are the Springs
of all unfoci-
able Practices.

2. He who lives under God's Government, has subdued those Appetites and Passions, which are the immediate Springs of those unfociable Practices which I have mention'd.

Sensual Desires, Covetousness, Pride, Malice, Revenge, Anger, and Selfishness, and such like exorbitant Inclinations break the Bonds, and are the Destruction of all Societies.

Whence,

Whence, saies St. James, are Wars and Fightings amongst you? are they not hence, even from your Lusts, which war in your Members?

It is an easie Matter to follow all the Quarrels and Commotions, all the Disorders, the Seditions, the Tumults, the Discords and Variances that are in the VWorld, up to these Beginnings.

First, a Man is disorder'd in himself, and then with others: he is first unquiet within, and irregular at home, and then abroad.

We may easily observe, that such as have at any Time caused Disturbances in Families, Unquietness in Neighbourhoods, Commotions in States, have notoriously been either Proud or Covetous, or Malicious or Peevish, &c. Infomuch that tho they have coloured over what they did with some better Pretences, yet these have been very easily seen through, and underneath has lurked some secret Ambition, or love of Money, or some such Thing. These have been the true Causes of all the Disorders and Disturbances in Societies, however others have born the Blame.

Religion it self has been looked on as the great Incendiary, when it was Pride, and Revenge, and Self-love, &c. which under the Disguise of Religion (to which yet they are so directly opposite) have brought in all those Confusions and Desolations that have at any Time been in the World.

For Proof of this, I appeal to History, where we cannot but discern, that this is most plain—And it is as clear, that

Who-

Whosoever gives himself up to God's Government by Christ, is no longer subject to such Inclinations and Affections as these. He is no longer a Drudge to Sensuality, a Slave to Honour, a Servant to Wealth; he is not acted by Malice, nor sway'd by Revenge, nor under the Power of Anger; nor does he live to himself: But his principal Regard is to God; to obey, to serve, to please, to glorifie God, is his Work, his Study.

His Understanding is better informed, his Mistakes are better rectified, from which those evil Desires arose; he is convinced of the Vanity and Undesirableness of Riches and Honour, and sensual Gratification: He is engaged in an Employment that is inconsistent with such extravagant Appetites, he has other Desires and Affections, which are quite opposite to, and take him clear off from these.

Observance of
all that by
which Society
does subsist.

3. He that lives in subjection to God's Government, is hereby engaged to observe and do all that, without which Society cannot subsist. There are three Things which are confessedly necessary to this very Being of Societies.

1. That the Members of it be diligent in some useful Imploiment. It is an honourable Industry which maintains all States: Such is our Condition here, that unless Men be imploi'd in one Kind or other, they either will not live at all, or but wretchedly, where the Generality are slothful, or uselessly busie, so as not to serve the Ends of Man, the Purposes

poses of Life, that State cannot subsist : No more than that natural Body can be preserved, whose Parts are most-what become useless, and do not discharge their proper Functions.

2. Truth and Justice. That Men be true to their Words, punctual to their Appointments, and faithful in all their Promises. — That they make good their Contracts, and stand to all their Bargains, and give unto every Man what is his due.

Falshood, Lying, Unfaithfulness, Injustice are destructive of Society, make Men quit Converse, and betake themselves to Solitude. Where we cannot rely on Men's Words, we shall not care for their Conversation; and where Justice is not, we shall think our selves better and safer alone, than with those that will defraud and injure us.

3. The maintaining good Order : That Superiors and Inferiors keep their Places; that every one continue in his own Station, and busie himself in that Work for which he is by God and Nature fitted, and to which he by the good Laws and Customs of any Government is appointed.

The Neglect of this it was, that broke the Society of God's highest Creatures; the Angels left their own Habitation, their proper Station and Province. And it cannot fail to have the same ill Effect on Earth, which it had in Heaven. Thus necessary are these Things to the upholding of all Society.

Now he who is subject to the Divine Laws, cannot live out of some honest Imploiment or other ; he cannot allow himself to live a lazy uselefs Life : It is so directly contrary to what God has both by Nature and Revelation declared, that he must renounce his Allegiance to Heaven before he can live idly and unprofitably.

As for Truth and Justice ; they are so apparently agreeable both to the Divine Nature and Will, that whosoever acknowledges God, must look on himself as under indispensable Obligations to them.

He also that takes a view of that Beauty and Usefulness, which arise from the Order that is in the World, and in our own selves ; and of the Mischiefs that come from Confusion, from giving too much to one Faculty and Appetite, and too little to another ; he will apprehend the excellent Use, the absolute Necessity of Order in Societies of Men : And therefore, that it is the indispensable Law of the Governour of the World, that it be observ'd and upheld. But he that looks into the written Revelation of God's Will, discovers so many, and such plain particular Precepts concerning this, in abundance of Instances of Parents and Children, Masters and Servants, Princes and People, &c. that he must disclaim all Subjection to God, who is not careful to maintain Order.

Thus it appears, that Subjection to God's Will does infer a doing of those things, without which Society cannot be upheld. But that is not all ; for,

4. It also imports such Qualities, and does oblige Men to such a Carriage and Behaviour, as will render Conversation not only safe, but profitable and pleasant; and make Societies prosper and flourish.

Observance of all that which make Societies profitable and pleasant.

The Things which I have already mentioned; do contribute very much to the welfare of a State, which cannot but thrive, where the Members of it are orderly, and just, and industrious. But to these I add three more, which have an excellent Influence on those Societies where they are found. As 1. Humility and Modesty. 2. Meekness and Gentleness. 3. Universal Good-will. Many more might be enumerated, but these may suffice.

Now no Man can be ignorant, that it is the Will of God, that he should be humble and modest, meek and gentle, both in his Temper and Carriage; and that he is under Obligation to love all Mankind.

And it is as plain, that these Things have good Effects on Societies, as that they are according to the Will of God. If any Man have not yet considered this, or be not fully satisfied, that these things have such a Tendency to the well-being of a State, let him,

1. Observe whether the want of some, or of all these, be not the perpetual Cause of all the Distractions, Commotions, Disturbances that are amongst Men? Whether he has ever taken notice of any Disquiets and Disorders in the World, where these have not been notoriously defective? Whether the

want of these has not been the principal, if not the only Cause of all the Mischiefs which have happen'd to, and from Societies? Go to Histories, or keep within the Compass of your own Observation, you will not find one Exception from this, that the Men who are Troublers of private Conversation, or Disturbers of the publick Peace, do not think lowly of themselves, are not of patient Temper, and mild Behaviour, do not bear Universal Good-will? If this do not persuade, let him,

2. Suppose a Polity where Men are thus qualified: Every one thinks himself as low and little as indeed he is, and desires not that others should esteem him better than he does himself; no one of them is at any time transported with a brutish unreasonable Anger: They are all acted with a Love to each other, and every one desires the good of all. The Prince studies the Welfare of all his People: they likewise wish and endeavour the Honour, and Safety, and Prosperity of their Prince.

Where it is thus, how is it possible for Disorders and Tumults, for Discords and Rebellions to arise in such a State? They must first leave off their Humility, and their Gentleness, and cease to love, before they can fall into Confusions.

Civil Discords can never hurt a State thus qualified; nor is it in any great Danger from a Foreigner, who seldom makes a successful Invasion, where the State is united in love. So that as they are secure at home, so
they

they are in no great Danger from abroad.

This Supposition (I do heartily wish it were more than a Supposition) of an humble, meek, loving Spirit's being in any Society or Company of Men, shews how strong, how impregnable, how quiet, how prosperous their State must be.

Let me only advertise you of what you cannot but observe, that these Things render private Converse easie, pleasant, safe, and profitable. With what Content do we go into such Company ? With what Pleasure do we stay with them ? How loth are we to part from the Lowly-minded, Meek-spirited, Loving Men ? These are the Things that make Conversation desirable ; without them it is unprofitable, if not mischievous.

If all this suffice not to perswade, that the erecting of God's Kingdom in Men's Hearts and Lives would have a most excellent Influence upon States ; and be greatly beneficial to Men in respect to their Living and Converse with each other in the World. Let me add yet further this Consideration, that,

5. Unless God's Kingdom be thus set up, no earthly Kingdom can stand ; all our States and Politics must necessarily fall in Pieces.

Without God's Government, no earthly Kingdom can stand.

The Truth of this may appear from this Observation, which ancient and modern Histories furnish us with, That according as Religion, and the Acknowledgment of God, has more or less prevail'd amongst any People, their State has been more or less peaceable

and prosperous. Also that wherever they have thrown off all Regard to God, and Obedience to what by Nature, or otherwise they knew to be his Will; where this has been General, and without Excuse, it has gone immediately before their Destruction. And that none have at any time been destroyed, where this general Defection from, neglect of, and Rebellion against God, has not been. I appeal to History and Observation for the Truth of this.

But besides, the Reason that it must be so, is also plain. For if we take away Religion, and the Obligations which it lays upon us to Obedience, and Peace, and Justice, &c. there is nothing left that can have force enough on Man to keep him in the Observance of these Things that make for Peace; nothing of sufficient Force to engage the Governours to rule well, nor the People to obey those that are over them.

For there are only remaining a Desire of what is fit, and Hopes and Fears of what can, and will be done for, or against them, either by the Prince, or by the People.

Now where God is not own'd, Men have little Sense of, or Regard for what is fit; it has but little sway with them. And he that has set himself so high, and depressed his People so low, that he is out of their Reach, that they cannot do any more for him, than they do; nor can they do any Thing against him, of which they are so sensible, that they will not once attempt it, nor think of it: What can he expect or fear

fear from such Impotents as these? If he be a Man of a cruel fierce Disposition, what can be expected, but that he will gratifie his tyrannical Humour in the barbarous Usage of his poor Slaves, who are like Sheep in a Wolves keeping?

On the other hand, when the Subjects of any Prince have cast off the Fear of God, and are no longer kept within the Bounds of their Duty by respect unto Heaven, and the great Governour of the World; what hinders but that they should bandy together, and pull down the Throne which they look on with envious Eyes, and strongly (tho falsely) imagine it to be the Cause of all their Misery, which their own Folly and Wickedness has laid them under? What restrains them, but that they will go about to rescue themselves into a Liberty, that they may every one do what they list, without Controul from any Superiour? For they know if they can combine, they are too great a Force to be resisted.;

Again; If Subjects come to be acted meerly by human Hopes and Fears, whenever any one grows more powerful than their own lawful Governour, they will then most certainly fall off from their Loyalty to him, because there is another, a more potent Person, for whom they have greater Hopes and Fears. And wherever a Prince is, through any real or supposed Defects natural or moral, or some Male-administration of Affairs, or but want of success, become hated or despised by these incompetent Judges of publick

lick Matters; they will throw off that Allegiance which is tied on them by no stronger Bonds, and so a Dissolution of that Government must ensue.

To conclude this: Where there is no Religion, no Regard to God amongst Men, we are no better than Brutes. If we have some more Reason, and the Advantages of Speech above them, yet these are but Servants and Instruments of the brutish Life; and only enable us for the most part to do worse Things than the Beasts themselves do, or can; and so are less capable of living in Society than they are. And where Men have thus sunk themselves into Beasts, it is certain that nothing but the greatest Strength and Force must constitute the Supreme Authority.

That the Want of Religion makes us incapable of living in Society, is confessed by the constant Practice of the best Statesmen, the wisest Governours, and the greatest Politicians of all Ages, who have taken great Care, that Religion be kept up in its Power amongst the People: Which being done chiefly by Example, they would at least appear Religious themselves, even then when their ungovern'd Appetites and enormous Follies would not suffer them to be so indeed. And there is no Man who thinks, but sees clearly, that a due, *i. e.* the highest Regard, to God is both the Foundation and Cement of every human Society that is built on Earth, that this alone can unite all the Parts, and give Firmness and Solidity to the whole.

These

These then are some of the many Benefits which accrue to Men by putting themselves under God's Government. And they are such, as one would think should prevail upon Men of all Ways and Humours. For there is no natural and reasonable Desire, but may hereby be gratified : no wise and good Design, no valuable Interest, but may by this be served and secured.

These Benefits of God's Government are apt to move Men of all Tempers, Designs, and Interests.

1. The honest and vertuous Soul, that would always do what is fit and right, will by a constant and diligent Observance of the most righteous Judgments of Heaven not miscarry in this.

He that gives God his Right, will (probably) not fail to give Men theirs. He that does what becomes him in the highest, and in some respect, the hardest Instance of it, will not fall short in the easier. On the other hand, he who denies unto God that which is so much his Due, as the Disposal of our selves is, will, I doubt, deny his Brethren theirs : He who has broke the stronger Bonds, will easily twitch in Pieces the weaker.

The Will or Law of God, as I have shewn, contains in it all that is good and fit, all that is just and vertuous. Whoever therefore puts himself in Subjection to the Divine Will, he is hereby conducted and engaged to all that is right and good. And thus that very natural, and most rational Appetite which human Souls have to what is fit, and just, and holy, will be complied with, and gratified by our living under God's Government.

2. The

2. The Man who is aspiring after the greatest Perfection to which human Nature can be rais'd, by giving Obedience to God as his Sovereign, comes to attain that which he so vehemently longs for.

This will raise and guide his Thoughts, steer his Judgment, moderate his Passion, invigorate his Faculties, enlarge his Heart, and enoble his Soul ; by this means he will perceive himself advanced to great Perfection ; and that he is in the ready Way to far greater : of this he assures himself, because he is now under the Conduct, and at the Determination of that Good-will, which designs the utmost Perfection of all Things.

3. The Sons of Pleasure may, by putting themselves into Subjection to God's Government, be possess'd of all that Satisfaction, those ineffable Delights, which in all other Ways they eagerly, but foolishly and vainly pursue.

They enjoy the Pleasures of acting naturally, and accountably, and wisely ; they have the Calmness and Serenity of a good Conscience, are fully discharged of all those Fears and Anxieties, those Solitudes and Cares which fill'd their Thoughts, whilst they liv'd without all Sense of God, or not in a fit Acknowledgment of his Sovereignty.

They are firmly perswaded, that God takes care of them, and so they unburthen their Souls of their Cares and Fears, and cast them upon the great Preserver.

4. The

4. The Men of this World ; They who desire a Sufficiency and Conveniency of the Things of this bodily Life (as every Man naturally does, and may, provided his Desires do not exceed their just Bounds) even such as these take the best Course to have their Desires satisfied, when they live in due Observance of the Divine Laws.

In the old Dispensation, *Solomon* tells us, That *Wisdom had in her right Hand length of Days, and in her left Hand Riches and Honour.* Those Blessings were bestowed on Men then. And under Christ we are assured, that Godliness has the Promises of this Life. Of this any Man may assure himself, who can but discern the direct, and almost necessary Tendency, that living soberly and righteously, in Obedience to God, has to make, and keep Men's Bodies healthful, to preserve their natural Life. But if to this he add, that God superintends the Affairs of this World, that his Providence makes rich or poor ; that he commands Health, or sends Sickness ; that he gives us Favour with Men, or bids them to think and speak hardly of us. If he be also perswaded of this, he is then well-assured, that he takes the best Course to be rich, or great, to enjoy Health, or to live long.

So that the Men who are sharpest set upon this World, should (methinks) be perswaded to give up themselves to God's Government, since all these Things are at his Disposal : And it is most certain, that he will give a convenient Portion of them to his Loyal Subjects, his obedient Servants. All

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ye that are Worshippers of Mammon, consider this; the best, the surest Way to be rich, is to become the Servants of God, to obey his Laws, to live in Subjection to his Government.

5. They who look beyond Death and the Grave, they who cannot confine their Thoughts to what is here (as indeed who can?) by an entire Resignation of themselves to the Will of God, and living under his Government, take the only Way to secure unto themselves a blessed Immortality.

For whom can we in Reason think should God make Partakers of the Bliss and glorious Rewards of Heaven, but such as have been obedient to him on Earth? As many as do believe the Gospel, must be fully assured of this, because it is plainly declared, and so often repeated, that they only, who do the Will of God, shall enter into the Joy of Heaven. Thus far we have considered a Man as minding himself only.

6. If we consider him as concern'd not only for himself, but others also, and both on his own and other Men's Account, seeking the good Condition of the Church or State in which he is (as every honest good Man does) or indeed the Prosperity of the whole Society of Mankind on Earth: There is no better, plainer, easier, surer, nay, no other Way to make it peaceable and prosperous, than to have God's Supremacy over all, acknowledged and submitted unto by all.

This

This is so plain, that (but that I know plain Truths are too commonly despised by Men of Reach) I should wonder, that all the Politicians in the World should not make it their great Business to preserve Religion, which alone can preserve them. If God be neglected, they who hold all they have by Commission from him, must be despised. So much are they out in their Policy, that think to settle Peace upon the Ruines of Religion, which is indeed the only firm Foundation of all Peace ; take that away, and all human Authority falls to the Ground, tho some shadow of it, such as is amongst Brutes, may remain. For the Strength of the Lion, and the Subtilty of the Fox, will be still scuffling for Superiority, &c.

If any should here interrupt me with *Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum* ; and tell me, that the setting up God's Kingdom has been the great Disturber of the Peace of the World ; and that no Place on Earth is fuller of Wars and Unquietness, than Christendom. I make this short Reply ; That it was not Religion, but somewhat that passed under that Name, of which that Observation is made. *Reply.*

* It was the false and foolish Superstition, and the wicked Idolatries of the Heathens, which deserved such a Censure. This was not to be imputed to the Religion, which our great Maker had implanted in our Natures, but to some odd Crotchets and Fancies, which Men had taken up for Religion. It was not the owning and Veneration of the one

one Supreme God who made the World, which was the Cause of such dire Calamities, but it was the giving Divine Honour to those that were no Gods; and the ridiculous and mischievous Usages that were obtruded on Mankind for the Laws of God: whereas they were indeed the Inventions of unconsidering and prejudiced Men; or the Impositions of the cruel, or the meer Stratagems of the Devil and his Subjects, to extirpate the Belief of God, and to cast Dishonour on all Religion.

Thus it was when this Observation was first made, and that by a Man not over-well affected to Religion, and the Worship of God, at least as it was practised in that Age wherein he lived; and so would be apt to bespatter Religion it self, and accuse it of that for which it was not to be blamed.

The very same is to be said since our Saviour has appeared: It is not his Religion, but the want of it, that is the Cause of so much Mischief to Societies. It is indeed something that calls it self Purity, and goes for the Religion of Christ; but it is only a Pretence, a Shew; it is the Contradiction to it, which under the Profession and Title of Religion, makes all this Havock in the World.

Is it because Christians are commanded to live soberly, righteously, and godly, that they do Violence to one another? Are these the Things that cause Wars and Tumults? Are these the hidden Causes why so much human Blood is shed? why so many Men have
their

their Estates seized? Does my religious Veneration of God, and the Obligation which he lays upon me to be just to Man, encline me to disobey and rebel against my earthly Governours? Because I acknowledge God's Sovereignty, must I therefore disown all those who are appointed by him to be his Deputies?

Or do Men make all this Stir which is made in the World, because they are of sober Minds and Behaviour? because they have moderate Desires, and regular Passions? because they are Humble and Meek? because they are heavenly-minded, and hope in the Ways of Charity, and of all Goodness, to be made happy? Are these the Principles of those woful Confusions that are amongst us?

No, no; all Men see, that it is Atheism and Infidelity, 'tis Ambition and Covetousness, 'tis Inhumanity and Devilism, that have put on the Badge of Religion, that make the Profession and Shew the very Engine to overthrow the Truth and Power of it.

Wherefore let no Man think the worse of Religion for the Mischiefs which they do, who are Pretenders to it. And when he sees States over-turned, Countries laid waste, the Blood of thousands spilled; honest harmless vertuous Men, who fear God, imitate their Saviour, and love all Men; when he sees such as these imprison'd, dungeon'd, tortur'd, and at last perhaps burnt at a Stake: Let him not then say, This is Religion: no, but this is Irreligion; this is from Profaneness,

ness, from Ignorance or Hatred of God that these Things are done ; it is the Mockery and Contempt of Religion, and a Contrivance to banish it out of the Hearts and Lives of Men, which does such Things as these.

Sure no Man can be so senseless as to think that the Knowledge and Love of the infinite Goodness, or that a diligent Observance of his Laws, which are summ'd up in Love, can be that bitter Root on which such evil Fruits grow. No Man can imagine, that love to God, and Good-will to all the World, will ever engage Men in Seditions and Tumults, in Rebellions, in Oppressions, and Persecutions : No, as soon may the Sun bring forth Darkness, as the Religion of Christ, this.

This may suffice for Satisfaction to that Objection ; notwithstanding which, it ever was, and will be true, that the hearty Acknowledgment of God's Sovereignty over us, or real Religion is the most necessary Support and Defence of all Earthly Government.

O that this were well understood, and duly considered by all the Potentates of the World, by all that govern, and by all that are governed, that God's Government set up and submitted unto, would have such excellent Influence on particular Politicks, nay, on the whole Society of Mankind, to keep Peace amongst them, and to make their Conversation safe and useful ! How would they all, both Princes and People, use their utmost Endeavours to have God own'd, and his Laws obey'd ?

Thus

Thus I have attempted to shew, that all our reasonable Desires would be gratified, all our manly Appetites that concern either our selves, or others, this Life or a better, satisfied; if we had God's Government erected in our Hearts, and were obedient unto him in Life.

This is the Sum of all we desire and seek after; it comprises and comprehends all that we love and value. There is no reasonable Desire in Man, but is carried after some part of, or some Means that leads unto this.

God's Government is the Sum of all that we reasonably desire or seek for.

This is the good, the very best State of Mankind, and consequently of all this inferior Creation; it is the World brought into good Order, all things set in their proper Place, other Things in Subjection unto Man, and Man unto God.

It is the Upshot, the utmost issue whither all the Divine Dispensations tend, the Mark at which they aim, the End in which they will all terminate, as St. Paul has taught us, 1 Cor. 15. 24, 28. *Then cometh the End* (i. e. of Christ's Mediatorial Kingdom) *when he shall give up the Kingdom to God, even the Father*, who will no longer govern by the Man Christ Jesus, but will take the Government more immediately into his own Hands, and the Son himself shall be discharged of his Mediatorial Administration, and be subject unto God, who shall be All in All.

The Issue of all Divine Dispensations.

This is that State of Perfection to which all is tending, when God shall more manifestly appear, and act as Sovereign Lord of things tend.

The State of Perfection to which all things tend.

Heaven and Earth, and all those who have been prevail'd with by his Methods, to own him as their Lord, and to give him that Obedience which is due to their Supreme Governour, shall be admitted to the nearer Views of his Glory, and abundantly rewarded for all their Obedience;—set out of the Reach of Danger from the Enemy, and confirm'd in that Disposition to do the Will of God, which they shall know better, and love more than ever. But for those that obstinately persist in their Disobedience, and would not have him to rule over them, they shall have no Admission into that blessed State, where the Will of God is perfectly done.

The Excellency
of this State.

And now let us say, If that will not be a most excellent State, where all, both Men and Angels shall, with all their might, be doing the Will of the Supreme Lord of all, and shall all live under the Shadow of his Wings, shall be sheltered and defended by his Almighty Power, that no evil shall come near them; and shall receive those glorious Rewards which infinite Goodness can think fit to bestow.

How firm the Peace, how flourishing the State, how great will be the Glory of that Kingdom, where are clear and certain Knowledge, spotless Purity, Universal Goodness, most ardent Love of God, and intire Resignation unto him, and perfect Good-will to all our Fellow-Subjects? How exquisite, how pure and defecate, how certain and how lasting will the Pleasures there be?

I must not now enter upon any farther Description of that State, when God's Kingdom shall have subdued all the Powers that opposed it, and shall appear in all its Glory.

Thus will it be in Heaven, when due Subjection shall be made to the Sovereign Lord of the World by all the Members of that Kingdom. And the more we on Earth come to an Acknowledgment of God, and to a Willingness that he should rule over us, the more we shall live under the Divine Protection, the more shall we partake of the Felicities of Heaven whilst we are here.

If God's Will were done on Earth, as it is in Heaven, we should then be Partakers of the same Joys which they have, the same for Kind, tho not for Degree; we should have as much as our Flesh and Blood, our frail Natures, and imperfect State could bear.

If God's Government were set up in all our Hearts and Lives, if Princes and People, Clergy and Laity, Masters and Servants, Old and Young, Rich and Poor, High and Low, did all submit unto it, how peaceable, how prosperous would all our Societies be? What a Heaven should we have upon Earth? Princes would not then fear to be dethron'd by their Subjects; nor Subjects to be enslaved and tyrannized over by their Princes. And in every Condition and Relation in which Men are, they would so act, as to do the best, to promote the greatest Good, which is most undoubtedly the eternal, the unalterable Will of God.

Objection.

Before I proceed farther, I will remove an Objection, which, if it be not satisfied, may undermine what has been said. It is this— You have been perswading us, may some say, to seek God's Kingdom and Righteousness in the first place, by Arguments drawn from the *Benefits* that do accrue to those who have it set up. This implies, that there is something better, and more valuable than God's Kingdom; for else why should the Consideration of that more prevail with us, than of the Kingdom it self? If that be better than the other Things which you mention; to what purpose do you set them before us? For if the greater Good will not prevail on us, the lesser cannot. And on the other hand, if there be any Thing better than this, it ought not to be, it cannot, by those who understand it, be sought first.

To this I answer :

Reply.

1. As our Understandings are convinced many Times not by Arguments that are the strongest, and best in themselves, but such as are most forcible with us, and more known to us, than the Thing which they argue. So our Wills are moved not always by that which is best simply, but by that to which they are most inclined and carried.

How often are we perswaded to some excellent Undertaking, by a petty inconsiderable trifling Good? Something that is not comparable to that other in true Judgment, yet in our mistaken Apprehension it may be better. As we do with Children, God deals with

with us :——*Pueris dant crustula blandi Doctores, Elementa vellent ut dicere prima* : We give them Cakes and Baubles to entice them to their Books, the learning of which is far better, tho they do not think so.

God allures us with Riches, and Honour, and long Life, to keep his Commandments ; whereas a vertuous Obedience to the Divine Will, is transcendently more valuable than all these Things, tho we in our Childish State may set a greater Price on these Baubles in comparison. And the Scripture frequently uses Arguments to perswade us, which are suited to our imperfect State, to our Ignorance, and to our Mistakes.

2. It is not necessary that it should be always a greater Good by which we are perswaded ; it is enough that it be good, and another. For all that is good, is desirable by us ; and if it be another, if it be different from that, to which we are allured, it may in some Sense be greater, as it adds to the Goodness of that. For the least Good added to a great one, if it be not the very same, encreases it, and makes it still bigger.

Now then, if we suppose these Benefits which I have mentioned, to be different from the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, yet if they be good, they are desirable by us ; and if they be added to that, they make it still better, and more desirable.

3. The Benefits which I have mentioned, are but either Parts of, or the natural Consequents, or very certain Effects of God's Kingdom and Righteousness.

So that when I have said what Advantages come by it, I have only unfolded the Notion, and given you a particular Account of what is signified by that Phrase.

And not only all those Benefits which I have reckon'd, but many more are wrapped up in those Expressions, *the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness*, as Parts of the whole, or as Effects in their Causes.

So that I have not used an Argument that was extrinsecal to the Thing, to which I have been perswading; I have only opened the Coffer, and given you a sight of the rich Treasure which is contain'd in it; I have only told you, and that very imperfectly, what the Kingdom of God is. This is the Sum of all I have said, that it is the best of all that which is good to Men, that it is in effect all that is desirable by us.

A Review and further Enforcement of the two Arguments which have been urged.

In the Beginning of this Discourse I propounded to consider two Things.

I. The Goodness, the Excellency of God's Kingdom and Righteousness.

II. The Fitness, and Availableness, and Necessity of our seeking it, and that in the first place.

1. As to the first; I am very sensible how imperfect an Account I have given of that most excellent State, where God's Sovereignty is acknowledged, and his Will obeyed by all; where he gives Laws, and Men obey them, and he protects and rewards his obedient Subjects; where Men in obedience to
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the Supreme Authority of God, do what is good and fit in respect of God, and of themselves, and of the whole Creation.

How desirable is such a State of Things? How will every Man that loves Goodness, long for it? How does the whole Creation groan to be released from that miserable Bondage, under which it is held by the Tyranny of other Lords, who have invaded the Throne, usurped the Dominion of the most High? How does poor Mankind cry mightily under this hard Vassalage, of which the *Egyptian* Bondage was but a Shadow?

And the very Hopes we have, that God will take the Administration of Things into his own Hand in another manner than hitherto he has done; that the Day of his Power will come, when all Men shall be willingly obedient to his Laws: the very hopes of this do revive and cheer our fainting Souls. And we shall be ready to break out into such Expressions as *David* used, *Psal.* 96. 11. *Let the Heavens rejoice, and let the Earth be glad: let the Sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the Field be joyful, and all that is therein: Then shall all the Trees of the Wood rejoice before the Lord.* Why, what is the matter? *For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the Earth: He shall judge the World in Righteousness, and the People with Equity.* And as it follows, *Psal.* 97. 1. *The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice; let the multitude of the Isles be glad thereof.*

There will be cause of this Universal Gladness, when God shall appear in his Glory as the Sovereign Lord of all; and when all

Men shall pay Homage and live in Subjection to him ; when his Kingdom shall come with so much Power as to throw down all Power that opposes and exalts it self against it.

For then, and not till then, will be the time of the Restitution of all Things ; then will all Things be in excellent Order, the World will be brought to rights ; all that can by the wisest and best Methods, will be made perfect ; we shall all be doing, and be ever ready to do the Will of our great Lord. And we shall be safe from all Evil, sheltered under the Divine Protection. We shall receive all Good, so it may well be presumed, when infinite Love does dispense it.

This is the Manner of God's Kingdom ; thus it shall be with them, who have his Righteousness. Is not this to be wished, to be longed for, to be sought after, and that in the first place ? Must not every one that will seek his own Good, or the Good of others, that has Regard to the Honour of God, or the Welfare of Men, seek this ? And must not he that will proportion his Affections to the Goodness of Things, seek this before, and above all other Things ? Is not this better than all ?

Perhaps some may grant it to be the Object of our Wishes and Desires, that we may, and should long after it ; and may think him ill-affected that does not. And since the Thing seems fairly probable and likely to come to pass, and according to all the Discoveries which God has made of himself, and of his Counsel to us, shall certainly be ;
and

and every thing that exalts it self against it, shall be brought under its Subjection. Every one that has Faith in God, does not only desire, but expect it; we all (as 'tis said of old *Simeon*) wait for the Consolation of *Israel*: And as *Joseph* of *Arimathea* (Luke 23. 51.) look for this Kingdom of God. We may indeed desire and look for the Time when it will come, but do no more.

For (may some imagine) God will bring this about by an out-stretched Arm. Alas ! what will all that we can do, signifie towards the effecting it ? It will be of no Avail ; or, however, it is unnecessary : for the Thing will be done without us, so it will be a Bu-ying our selves to no purpose ; which, where-ever it is done, is to ill-purpose. For we might be better imploi'd about something fitter for us to undertake ; something that carries a fitter Proportion to our Weakness and Littleness, than this does, which is a Thing only commensurate to the Divine Power and Wisdom ; nothing short of these can be supposed to effect it.

Now that I may remove these Difficulties, and give Satisfaction to Minds that have these Thoughts rising in them, I shall endeavour to shew, (as to the second Argument)

2. That our earnest Endeavours must be added to our Desires ; that we ought not to stand still whilst we look for, and long after this Salvation of God, but that we are to do something ; nay, that we are to do the utmost we can in order to the bringing it about.

And

And that I may do this more fully, I shall endeavour to make appear, 1. That our thus seeking it, will be of some Efficacy for the obtaining what we aim at. 2. That it is in some Respects necessary, and without it God's Kingdom will not be set up, at least in our Souls. 3. It is very fit and behoveful, and will become us, to use our utmost Endeavours in this matter.

If we do add our best Endeavours to our Desires after God's Government, we shall do something of moment by God's Assistance.

1. If we do set our selves with all our might unto this, it will not be without effect, we shall do something, and something of moment. I do not say that we shall do all that is to be done in this Affair, that it lies wholly upon us; that none beside our selves are to do any thing; no, nor that it chiefly depends on us, neither do I exclude the Divine Assistance from what we do.

But yet tho I do not think that we do either all, or most that is to be done, or any thing without the Assistance of God; however, by his Help we may do something: Nay, we may do that which is very considerable in this Business. And if we, being strengthened by the Holy Spirit of God, set to it with all our might (as our Saviour here exhorts us) this will have great Efficacy.

It is no good Plea against our using Endeavours, that the Work is too big for us, and we cannot hope by our selves, nor by any supervenient Assistance, to set up God's Kingdom by what we can do: for we may as well by this reasoning, take our selves off from enterprising any good Action whatsoever.

For

For no Man is either the solitary, or the principal Cause of any Good which he does: we always act in Conjunction with others; and no Good is done by any Man, but God is the principal Author, and has the chief Hand in it.

He that will in any Case argue thus—Because I cannot do all, I will do nothing: he must lay aside all Thoughts of doing any Thing at all. For there is no imaginable Instance wherein Man, cut off from God, nay, or from all Help from his Fellow-Creatures, can be supposed to effect any Good: wherefore this can be no sufficient Reason to take any one off from using his Endeavours to set up God's Kingdom, that of, and by himself he is unable to effect it.

Now let us see how much a Man, by God's Assistance, putting forth his utmost Vigour, may do. And it will be thought very considerable, when we remember,

1. How much is done by Men who oppose God's Government, and what a mischievous Efficacy their Endeavours have to dethrone God. When they set themselves in Opposition to God, and make it their Business to throw off their Allegiance to him, and to hinder his Government from being set up on Earth, how too successful are they in their wicked Attempts?

And shall we not hope for as good success when we are at work for God, endeavouring to advance his Empire, and cause his Sovereignty to be acknowledged? Can we only act against God? Will our Attempts be

be vain, and without effect, when they are for him, and in his Cause? How can this be thought by us who are perswaded, that God gives success, and that he makes the good Man prosper in his Way in whatever he does?

2. A farther Proof of the Efficacy, which the Endeavours of Men of like Infirmary with our selves, have had in this very Case, may be from Example.

Let me put you in Mind of that great Apostle of us Gentiles, of what mighty Efficacy was the Care and Labour of that one Man to the pulling down of the Devil's, and setting up of God's Kingdom? What an Instrument was he in the Hands of God, for the *bringing many to Righteousness, for turning them from Darknes to Light, and from the Power* (ἐξουσία the Jurisdiction) *of Satan unto God?*

He strove not only against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities and Powers, and spiritual Wickednesses in high Places. And through the Divine Power co-operating with him, he was a great Conqueror over all. He was reproached and persecuted, imprisoned, condemned, and at last put to death: yet the Zeal which he had for setting up the Kingdom of Christ, turned all these Things into Advantages: And the more he suffered, the more did God's Cause prevail and prosper.

A much later Example we have of one, who was, I doubt not, a very good Man, tho much inferiour to St. Paul, *Luther* I mean;

a Man in no Respects (that I know) superior to abundance of Men ; his Learning, his Wisdom was not more than very many have, nay he seems to be exceeded in these, and equall'd in divers other Things, which might qualifie for this Work : yet being resolved upon it, and setting himself in good earnest to it, he did more towards the setting God's Government free from the Devil's Usurpation by the Pope, than would easily be believed, if all Histories did not testifie it, and if we our selves did not feel the good Effects of his Zeal and Industry to this day.

And since we have such undeniable Proofs of the mighty Efficacy which one Man's Endeavours had, in rescuing so much of the World from under Gentilism and Judaism ; and of anothers Success in recovering us from both Judaism and Paganism refined, and compounded in Popery : Let us never say, it is little or nothing that Man can do towards the accomplishing of this great Design.

Do not say, These are great Men, tho it is true, they were so : But consider that they were but Men, Men of Passions and Infirmities ; and yet their honest hearty Endeavours for the vindicating God's Right, by his Blessing became so successful, that we, and all who would have God to rule over us, must celebrate their Names, and commemorate them with Honour to all Posterities.

3. That we may be effectually rid of this Objection, let us consider something of that Success which our hearty Endeavours must have. He

He that makes this his first and chief Care, his daily and principal Study and Business, to bring himself under God's Government, to assert God's Right to rule over all his Inclinations and Desires, his Faculties and his Actions; he will find the Thing which he aims at, to be doing gradually.

He will perceive, that being after this manner directed and determin'd in the use of himself, he will be engaged to an universal and constant Activity; his various Faculties will be united and compacted, and all his inward Motions and outward Actions made regular and orderly, and brought into Subserviency unto each other; that is, he will be brought into the most perfect State of human Nature, and consequently into that which is, and will be the Issue of our greatest Perfection, viz. the Knowledg and Love of God, and Obedience to his Will.

Thus effectual will our hearty Endeavours after God's Kingdom and Righteousness be in our selves, to make us obedient and Righteous.

Of this we shall be more convinced, when we consider what a mighty Influence that which a Man propounds as his chief End, and makes his main Business, has over him. It is both the Original and Spring, and the Guide and Governour of all his inward Motions, Thoughts, and Affections; the Regulator that gives Bounds and Rules to all his Actions, and the very Mould of his Nature. We see it in such whose Business it is to be Rich, to be in Vogue with the World, or to gra-

gratifie their sensual Inclinations ; this is the Whirlpool that swallows them wholly up.

He therefore that makes this his great Care to set up God's Government in his Soul, and to be righteous as God is himself, and requires him to be, will in the ordinary way of Causality, attain to this his Design : He will by God's Grace indeed bring himself into perfect Subjection and Obedience to the Rule and Will of God.

In short ; He that out of an earnest Desire to obey the Divine Laws, shall be assiduously conversant in the sacred Scriptures, in the Explications of them, in Discourses grounded upon them, in Christian Conference and asking Counsel of others, in frequent and serious Consideration, in exercising himself to Godliness, in living under Discipline, in constant and fervent Prayer to God for the Aids of his Grace, in Self-observance and Watchfulness, &c. This Man cannot fail but he will have his Desire ; the Grace of God will not fail him to bring about the good End which he aims at ; in due Time God's Kingdom will be erected and established in his Soul.

This Effect will his Endeavours have upon himself ; nor will they be without Effect upon others. For, if he shall make this his Business in his Conversation with other Men by his Discourse, and by his Behaviour and exemplary Carriage to inform Ignorance, to rectifie Mistakes, to satisfie Doubts, to confirm the Wavering, to perswade the Refractory, to allure the Averse ; in short, to re-

remove all the Obstructions of God's Government over us, which are in Men's Minds : He will undoubtedly see some good Success of his Labours.

That Parent who will use all his Interest, all his Care, who will take the best, and all Times to engage and bring his Children into an hearty owning of God's Government, if he do not discern a present Effect, yet he may reasonably hope that he has sown the Seeds, which will afterwards grow up, or at least, that he has by such early Insinuations, laid a Restraint upon his Children, so as that they cannot so soon, nor so easily, nor so quietly be wicked as others are.

The like I might say of the Master of a Family, a Minister of the Gospel, a Magistrate, a Kinsman, a Friend, an Acquaintance, a Stranger ; if he speak what his Prudence (God directing) may suggest unto him as seasonable in pursuit of this Design ; Who knows but that Word which he has spoken with an honest Intention, may be the Instrument to reduce one from his disobedient rebellious Course of Life ? that one Man may be a Means to recover thousands ? Who knows into how much of the Mass this little Leaven may insinuate and spread it self ?

When I consider the irresistible Force of Truth, the great Wisdom, the charming Goodness that comes along with the Discourse, especially with the Practice of a Man, who above all Things sets himself to exalt God in the World, and to give him the Ho-

Honour of his most rightful Sovereignty over us ; I cannot but think, that this Engine alone would be able to batter down all the Strong-holds of the Devil, to pull him off his Throne, and to restore the Kingdom to him, to whom of Right it belongs ; And that this is no more done, must (I doubt) be resolved into our not attempting it.

This may suffice for the first Particular, That our seeking the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, will not be without all Effect, it will not be in vain.

2. Notwithstanding the Efficacy which our seeking God's Kingdom will have to the obtaining it : yet some may be apt to excuse themselves from this, unless it appear to be necessary. For if it will come, tho we do nothing, then may we as well spare our Pains ; nothing less than necessity will serve to drive us to take such Cares and Pains, as is implied by seeking it first. I shall therefore make appear, that this is absolutely necessary, by these following Considerations.

Our earnest Endeavours are also necessary.

1. The Scripture every where challenges our highest Regards as due unto God and his Service, and rejects whatever falls short of this.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart — He that loveth Father and Mother more than me, (saies our Saviour) is not worthy of me. — And except a Man hate his own Life, he cannot be my Disciple. — If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow me : that is, let him be prepared, and resolved to endure

the greatest Hardship, to encounter the greatest Dangers that can befall him whilst he obeys and imitates me : *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* God will have no Partner, no Sharer, &c.

The holy Scripture also directs us to this most earnest diligent seeking our own and other Men's being good and happy, (which is the same with what I am speaking of under another Notion) as the only Way to come by it. *Strive*, saies our Saviour, *to enter in at the strait Gate: For many shall seek, and shall not be able.* They shall seek, but carelessly, not with that Earnestness which is necessary ; they shall seek, but not in the first Place.

Again ; saies the Apostle, *So run, that ye may obtain* ; not every Running will serve the turn : *Work out your Salvation with Fear and Trembling.* And another Apostle saies, *Giving all Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure, or firm.* Every where the Holy Scripture lays such Stress upon our Endeavours, that we must infer, that our chief Regard must be to God, and to his Will.

2. Whosoever considers what God's Kingdom and Righteousness is, will say, that it both deserves and calls for our utmost Care and Diligence. It is the greatest, the hardest of all Works.

To be brought under Obedience to God, requires, 1. A laying aside many false Prejudices that have long possessed our Minds : Also a ceasing from inveterate ill Customs. 2. A diligent Observance of all our Actions and Words

Words, Affections, Inclinations, Thoughts; and this Watch must be constant. 3. A pertinacious Adherence to the Will and Law of God, notwithstanding all the Resistance which a Man has from the Importunities of Sense, the Allurements and Frowns of Men, and the Suggestions that are insinuated by the evil Spirit. So that a stiff Conflict with such a powerful Opposition as this must be maintain'd.

These three Things where they meet together, must make a Thing extraordinary difficult, as every Man's both Experience and Reason do testifie.

Any one of these Things make an Undertaking difficult; nay, where none of these are, yet Men cannot perform without Care and Pains, as is seen in the learning of any Trade; it requires Time and Study to practise it exactly, tho there be no false Notions to be forgot, nor ill Customs to be broke, tho there be no such need of Universal Attention, and constant Watchfulness, tho neither a Man's own Body, nor other Men, nor the Devil oppose him, yet he must industriously practise for some time before he attain to Exactness in any Employment. And is not this much more to be presumed in the Case before us?

Perhaps it will be granted, that the Work is hard; but we need not to trouble our selves with it, because it will be done to our Hand without our concurrence.

1. To this I reply, that I do heartily own the necessary and powerful Assistance of God's good Spirit. But then,

2. This does not supersede our Care and Diligence. They who think it does, are neither guided by the Scripture (which when it tells us of God's working in us to will and to do, yet calls upon us in the same Breath, to work out our Salvation, &c.) nor are they observant of themselves. Nay,

3. All that the Holy Spirit does operate in our Souls, without our working with him, will never bring us into God's Kingdom, nor make us Partakers of his Righteousness. All that is done upon us, by us, in us, so long as we are meerly passive, put forth no Act, make no Choice, give no Consent, do not determine our selves, this cannot profit us. If we be bad, we are not much the worse, till we come to make it our own by giving our Consent to it. And it is all one, if the Thing be good to which we are moved, until we voluntarily determine our selves unto it, we cannot be accounted vertuous.

God has so framed us, that we cannot be either happy or miserable without our own Acts. Nay, the more is done for us, and upon us, the more Illumination we receive from the blessed Spirit, unless we be excited to concur and co-operate, the worse, the more wretched and miserable we are; until we become a *willing People*, all the Power of God which operates upon us, has not yet perfected the *good Work* which he intends, *his grace is in vain*, his Kingdom is not set up

up in our Souls, until our Wills be brought over unto him.

So then, the Influence of that Divine Spirit is so far from excusing our Care, that indeed it excites it, and calls for a greater Diligence than before. For we must now comply with all the good Motions of God's Grace, and not quench, nor grieve the Holy Spirit of God, as by a dull uncomplying Sluggishness, and lazy careless Oslitancy we shall.

3. It implies a Contradiction to have God's Kingdom set up in the Soul, and yet not to seek it in the first place. He that has not the greatest Regard unto it, cannot have it: For that signifies God's being Supreme. Now if there be any Thing else, that has more of our Affection, and which we prefer before his Good-will, that Thing whatever it be, rules over us, it usurps the Throne of God.

3. It is very reasonable and fit that we should make this our earnest Study and main Business. And that upon divers Accounts.

1. This is agreeable to the Divine Methods, that our hearty Desire of, and our earnest seeking after any good Thing, should go before, should be the Way unto, and the Condition of our obtaining it. And the better any thing is, the more diligently and carefully it is to be sought.

What is there of any Value that Men obtain without Care and Pains? Riches, Learning, Honour, nay, Pleasure it self, are not to be had without this. And why should

It is most fit that we should use our utmost Endeavours in this matter.

we think, that Vertue and Holiness, that bringing our selves and others into a good State, that our Obedience to the Law of God, that living under his Protection, and receiving his Rewards (which is the best of all Things, and contains all that is Good in it) should be had without any Pains ; that Goodness and Happiness (as we say) drop into our Mouths ?

2. It is (and so we should esteem it) our great Honour and Priviledge, that God would vouchsafe to use us in the great Work of reforming the World, of reclaiming our selves, and reducing other Rebels to their Allegiance to Heaven. This we should take as a signal Favour, and mightily engage us to do our utmost in it. Especially,

3. Where we are about the best and hardest Work that we can be implo'd in ; In such a Case we may think it but fit, that we should act with all our might, do our best, our utmost, give all possible Diligence, set our Hearts upon it, never give it over, never grow remiss or careless in it. For so we do but proportion our Affections, our Study and Care to things ; we are most earnest in that which because of its being transcendently good, and extremely difficult, does deserve and challenge our greatest Care and Study.

Now that the bringing our selves and others to an inward hearty, constant and universal Acknowledgment of God's Sovereignty over us, to live our selves, and to help others to live in a willing and knowing Obedience to the Divine Law ; and to attain such

Per-

Perfection of Righteousness as will qualifie and prepare us for Heaven (where is no *unclean Thing*, where the Will of God is perfectly done) is both the most excellent, and the most difficult Thing, cannot be doubted.

Why therefore should we not think that this, which is the greatest of all things, does challenge of right our highest Affections, and greatest Industry, that we should use our best Skill, and set all our Powers on work, that we should not only *search for it as for Silver*, (but if it be possible) with more vehemence of Desire, than the covetous Man seeks Wealth, or the Ambitious pursues Honour.

4. The last Thing I shall mention to provoke our Diligence in this, is the very great Earnestness of others who oppose the setting up of God's Kingdom, and the assiduous unwearied Labour of them who would not have Righteousness brought into the World.

How unwearied is the great Usurper upon God's Rights, to draw off God's Subjects from their Allegiance and Homage? How industrious to bring us all under his Vassalage, to take us off from our Obedience to God, and from under the Divine Protection; that we may be his miserable Vassals?

And such as he has gain'd to his Party, what do they not do to oppose God's Government, and to hinder Righteousness from taking Place with Men? How many Sleights and crafty Devices have they to inveigle the Simple? to debauch the Innocent and Modest? what will they not do to retrieve

a Man, who was leaving their evil Ways? What stumbling-Blocks will they not lay in the Paths of those that consort not with them? What do they not do? What Pains will they not take? What Trouble do they not endure to keep themselves or others from living a Life of Holiness and Virtue?

And is it not a Shame, that these Men should do more against God, than we will do for him? that they should be more zealous in setting up the Kingdom of the Devil, the Usurper, than we do in erecting the Throne of God, the rightful Lord of all?

Let us never bring such Dishonour upon God and his Government, as by our Neglect of, and Indifferency about it, to give Occasion to Observers to say, Surely it is no such desirable Thing! For if it were, these that are his Subjects, would be more earnest to bring themselves and others into this good State.

If wicked and foolish Men be active, be restless in pulling down, let us be no less diligent and unwearied in setting up of God's Kingdom. They on the behalf of the Devil, are impudent, cunning, restless to bring in Confusion, and every evil Work, with the woful Miseries which follow: Let us in the Name, and for the sake of our true Sovereign, the ever-blessed God, be bold, and wise, and sedulous to bring ourselves and others to Righteousness, asserting and maintaining God's Authority.

I come at last to a Conclusion of what I shall

shall discourse on these Words of our Saviour in the Text, which contain in them so important Matter, so wise and good, so excellent and so necessary Counsel for the Conduct of our Lives, they comprise both our Duty, and also our Perfection and Happiness. They are the whole of Man, shewing us the most and highest that we can come unto; and also the least and lowest that every Man must arrive at, if ever he be saved.

The Text which has been discoursed on, comprises both our Duty and our Reward.

Righteousness, and the living in due Acknowledgment of God's Sovereignty and Obedience to his Laws, is the utmost Perfection that the Angels of Glory reach to: And the being in Subjection to the Divine Will, and hearty Obedience to his Government, is the Attainment of the meanest of the Saints on Earth. It is both the lowest and highest Step of that Ladder which reaches from Earth to Heaven, and all the intermediate Rounds, the whole Way and Passage to the more perfect State, is nothing but a farther Progress in our Acknowledgment of God's Authority, a going on in the Way of Righteousness, or Obedience to his Will.

Nor is this all that is signified by God's Kingdom, but the very same Phrase which so fully declares our Duty, does no less plainly and fully declare our Advantage and Benefit. It shews the Protection of God under which we are; it also denotes those ample Rewards which he does, and will bestow on righteous Men, who are his Loyal Subjects, and obey his Laws.

Nor

Nor indeed are these two to be separated in our Thoughts, our Subjection and Obedience, and God's Protection and Rewards. For as many as will chuse God to rule over them, shall have him for their mighty Protector; and they who are willingly and constantly obedient to his Laws, shall receive *Grace and Glory; and no good Thing will infinite Goodness withhold from them.*

And for this Cause, that we might have both these Things before us at once, that both our Duty and our Reward might be in our View, the Wisdom of the Divine Spirit (we may suppose) has so often in the holy Scriptures used this Phrase, *the Kingdom of God*; whereby we are directed not to think of Vertue without Reference unto God, nor to take our selves from under his Government, nor to lay aside our Relation to that Society of Men in which we are; nor to consider either of our Duty, or of our Reward abstractedly, but to have them as much as may be together in our Thoughts.

The want of all this has been of very ill Consequence: For whilst Men have done that which is Good, but without all Regard to the Authority of the Divine Will, they may have receiv'd the natural Consequent of that naturally good Action, but have faln short of the Reward which is due to Obedience: And whilst they looked only at their own Obedience to the Divine Law, they were not animated as they would have been by the Thoughts of God's Protection and Recompence:

pence : So whilst they only considered the Glory and Happiness of Heaven, they might be in some Danger to forget their Duty, and what is to be done in Order to that.

This then is the Wisdom of the Holy Spirit that has made use of an Expression which contains all these, and sets both God and our selves, and other Men, our Duty, and our Safety, our Vertue, and our Happiness before us, and gives us at once a View of all.

By this appears, that this Matter might justly challenge, and does highly deserve all the Pains which I have bestowed upon it; and that the opening of this Phrase is of mighty Importance, since it propounds to us our Duty in the most obliging Manner, and to the best Advantage; as the doing of it will necessarily infer the Benefits which accrue to us by it, that we shall be under the Protection and Care of our great and good Sovereign : And it not only shews what we are to do, and have, but also what God is doing, and from whom we are to expect what we hope for.

By this also you will discern, that not only what I have been all this while saying, but also whatever I can say, must refer to this Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, that the setting up of this Kingdom, the bringing in of this Righteousness is the one End of all our Preaching and Hearing : that it is indeed the one great Business of our Lives.

That

That we may be more successful in this, I shall propound some Directions, and so conclude. And that we may proceed more clearly, I will say in short, what that is which I have been all this while perswading, and which I am now about to direct.

In general it is this, That we would use our utmost Endeavours, do all our best, that God may rule in our, and other Men's Hearts and Lives; that his Sovereignty over us, and the whole World should, be heartily acknowledged, and willingly submitted unto by us, and by all Men; that all our Thoughts as well as Words and Works, may be brought into Subjection unto God's Government; that all Mankind may live in Obedience to all the Divine Laws, both those writ in our Hearts, and in our Bibles, most especially those which are published by Jesus Christ, which are summ'd up in living soberly, righteously, and godly; in love to God and our Neighbour, and in Faith working by love, that we may be all brought to give a knowing, willing, constant Obedience to these, and to every Manifestation of the Divine Will.

That so being return'd to our Allegiance to our rightful Sovereign, we may all live under the Shelter of his Almighty Power, and be protected from all those Evils, which without his Defence, would befall us: And not only so, but that we may receive from him all that Good, all those Blessings which we desire and hope for, and of which we are capable, all that can befall us in this Life, or the future.

Having

Having thus called to mind what it is which I have been so long perswading, I now proceed to direct,

Labour after a clear, and large, and distinct knowledge of God's Kingdom and Righteousness, which you are exhorted to seek in the first place.

No Man can seek after what he does not know; or if we suppose that he cannot imagine he should find it. Ignorance or mistake must be an effectual Bar to all seeking, or will make it unsuccessful, and perhaps mischievous. This has been but too much verified in the Matter before us.

For whilst Men's Minds have been without all Notion of God's Kingdom and Righteousness, they could never once set about the seeking it. When they have had some general, confused Idea of it, mixed with mistake and false Concepts, whilst they have sought to erect and advance it, they have pulled it down.

Thus did the Jews, who had a great Zeal for it, but imagining that it consisted in an external Grandeur, and that it was to be a Kingdom of this World, they opposed and hindered God's real Kingdom from being set up by the Messiah.

Several Christians have been carried away with the same Error, (as some of the Fifth Monarchists have made too evident,) whilst they have endeavour'd by all means to set up a worldly secular Government, in nothing differing from what they pull'd down but in Name, calling it God's; and in some little

ex-

Directions.

1. Have a clear and distinct Knowledge of God's Kingdom and Righteousness.

exterior Modes and Circumstances ; and in the Change of their Governours, they who were before Subjects, being now Rulers.

But none have more notoriously miscarried through the Mistake, than the *Romanists*; in so much that it seems to be the $\alpha\rho\alpha\tau\omicron\nu$ $\lambda\omicron\upsilon\delta\omicron$ the fundamental Error of that Polity. They have a wrong conceit of that Kingdom which God intended by the Messiah to set up ; and this has led them into those numberless and mischievous Errors into which they are fallen.

All the Papal Defection from the Truth, the Purity and Simplicity of the Christian Religion may be resolved into their Mistakes of God's Kingdom and Righteousness, or into their Disaffection unto it. I would be loth to suppose this of the Generality, tho I doubt it is but too true of many of them, that they do not heartily love that inward Righteousness and Goodness in which it consists. Divers of them have taken it to be an external, pompous, worldly politick Thing : And this Misconceit has betrayed them into all those pernicious Practices, which are consonant to, and consequent upon it. And hereby they have as truly and effectually opposed the setting up of God's Kingdom on Earth, as ever the *Jews* did : And have made themselves as great Enemies to it, as any we know, whilst they pretend to set it up.

By this we may discern the absolute Necessity of having a true and clear Apprehension of God's Kingdom and Righteousness.

And

And in this we cannot easily, or not greatly mistake, if we do but impartially consider those plain Manifestations, which God has made of himself, and of his Will unto us, 1. By Nature and Reason. 2. In the sacred Scriptures, especially in the Gospel.

For as we cannot but think, that his Kingdom must be agreeable to his own excellent Nature, that it must become God in general, and that all his Laws must bear on them the Characters of his Divinity : So in particular we shall conclude them to be wise and good, and that his Government is spiritual and just.

These Properties of God's Government and Laws well attended unto, would sufficiently secure Men from all those dangerous Errors about them, into which so many have fallen.

For then nothing that is unreasonable and foolish, unjust or inequitable, nothing incongruous or mischievous, could be obtruded on the World under a pretence of Divine Authority. Men could never admit of any Regiment, nor suffer themselves to come under any Obligation in God's Name, which is not very agreeable to the Nature which he has given us, and which has not a manifest Tendency to the perfecting of his Creature, and which does not very well consist with, and tend to the good of Society, in which Man was made to live.

And were this well observ'd, how many of those Laws and Governments, which pretend to be of Divine Right, would be found

to

to have made a false Claim? But I must not now enter into so full a Discussion of this Matter, as the weight of it deserves. And I think enough has been said to excite us to use such Care in this Business, as is requisite to free us from Ignorance, and to prevent Mistakes about it.

To this let me add, that the more clear and plain, the more particular and exact, the more large and comprehensive Knowledge we have of God's Government, of the Nature, the Manner, the End of it; the better we understand the Laws by which God governs Mankind, the more we shall be excited and assisted in the setting up of God's Kingdom in our selves and the World, the better we shall understand the Fitness, and Goodness, and Necessity of it; and the more will our Affections towards it be engaged, the more sure Direction we shall have to those Methods and Ways which are most suitable and proper for the advancing of it.

Again; The more a Man understands, and is perswaded, that a knowing, willing, constant Obedience to all the Divine Laws, is the Righteousness of God, which here we are exhorted to seek with all our Might, the greater Advantage will this be to the bringing in of the Divine Righteousness into his own Soul, and into the World.

I farther add, That a general Notion of these Matters will not be so available, as if we come down to Particulars, and be resolved, that not only Sobriety (suppose) in general, is the Law of Heaven, but in particular,

particular, that such a Government of our Appetites, of our Passions or Faculties, is God's Will.

I would also advise, that we strive after a comparative Knowledge of God's Kingdom, *1st*, With that which is, and appears opposite to it, that is, the Devil's Rule over Men; that which he did so publicly exercise before the Incarnation of the Son of God, and which he still exercises amongst the Pagans. And also with that, *2^{ly}*, which is indeed subject to this, but may be distinguish'd in that Men are more visibly the Governours of it; and therefore it may be called a human Dominion. And, *3^{ly}*, with that which may, for Distinction-sake, be called Self-government; that is, when no Superior to Self is acknowledged, no Law above mine own Will.

These two last, the Kingdom of Men, and that of Self, when they are not subordinate to God's, may indeed be reduced to the Devil's Kingdom; for there are but two in the World, that is, God's and Satan's. And here that is most true; *Whosoever is not for, is against*: yet they all fall under distinct Consideration: And I have mentioned them severally, that we may be the more enabled and instructed for the Advancement and Defence of God's Kingdom, when we know not only all that opposes it, and all that is any way distinct, or differing from it. For the better we understand both the open, and the secret Enemies of God's Empire,

the more fit shall we be to stand up in its Behalf.

To what I am now saying, I refer this most necessary Advice; That we acquaint our selves with all the subtile Devices and crafty Method's, which are used by that grand Enemy of God's Kingdom, and of all those his Subjects and Servants, who promote his Designs, and do his Will. Let us carefully observe all the Tricks and Wiles which they use to oppose, to undermine, and to pull down God's Government, and to set up the Devils; let us be well aware of them.

For this will be of great Use to us in the right directing our Endeavours; many of which become fruitless, because we are ignorant of the Kingdom of Darknes, and understand not the Ways and Policies of that Society which is at enmity with God and Goodness.

To conclude this: Whosoever has a right Understanding of God's Kingdom and Laws, as he will discern them to be spiritual, to be wise, and just, and good, so he cannot think, that they will gain Authority, or ever be set up in the World by unspiritual carnal Methods, by folly, by Injustice, and by evil Practices.

Is it likely, that by Cruelty and Tyranny, by Falshood and Treachery, by Oppression and Violence, by unjust Arms, or by any the like Ways, God's Sovereignty should be set up in the Hearts of Men? Will they
ever

ever come into the Obedience of those Laws which command such Mischiefs as these? No, assuredly; the true Knowledge of God's Laws and Kingdom will teach us, that it is not to be erected by Force, nor Violence, nor Wickedness; *not by Force nor Might, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord*, as the Prophet expresses it.

This may suffice for the first, and great Direction, *viz.* to get a very clear and exact Knowledge of God's Kingdom and Righteousness in its Nature, its Causes and Effects, and in all that is opposite to, and undermines it.

2. Let us labour to bring, and keep our Minds under a lively vigorous Sense of God. Let us endeavour to be affected with the Apprehensions of the Divine most glorious Excellencies, and to live in the Thoughts and Perswasions of that Relation, in which we, and all Things are unto him: That is;

Endeavour after a lively Sense of God.

Let us keep upon our Minds an affecting Sense of the Power and Wisdom of the Holiness and Goodness of God, and be alway in the Belief, and frequently in the Thoughts of our, and all Men's depending upon him for our Life and Being; for what we are, and for what we can do; for all that we have, and hope for.

Whilst we are under such Thoughts as these, we are fully convinced, that, i. God has most unquestionable Right to all that we call ours; that is, he is our rightful Lord, and has a most indisputable Title

to us, that his Claim to us, is uncontrollable, and none can gain-say it ; he may do with us what he will, and none may say unto him, What dost thou ? 2. He is most sufficient, and on all Accounts most fit for ruling us and all Men, as being the best, the wisest, the most powerful Being in the World, indeed the Root from whence all Others derive all their Power ; and consequently to these two Perswasions we shall think that it is best, and indeed necessary, that we and all Men should be subject to, and govern'd by him ; that we should be very observant of, and compliant with every Manifestation, every Intimation of that Good-will which made us, and which designs our Perfection, to which we ow all we have, on which alone we depend, and from which we must receive all that we expect.

This makes it appear not only wise and fit, but also necessary that we follow the Counsel of the Will of God. It is impossible so long as a Man continues under the Power of these Thoughts, that he should be disobedient to the Divine Law, he can neither resist, nor neglect that Good-will on which he knows both himself and the World do so much depend.

No, before a Man can cast the Divine Laws behind his Back, he must have first cast off his Sense of God ; he must think him not so great, or not so good as he is ; or that himself and others are not such Dependants upon him, as indeed they are.

That

That therefore is our second Direction, live under this Perswasion, under this Sense of God.

3. Diligently consider what you do, and with what Mind, from what Principle, for what Reason you act. Observe your self thus before you undertake, whilst you are doing, and after the Performance.

Consider what
you do, and
with what
Mind.

Particularly, take especial Notice when you act with, and when without Consideration of, and due regard unto God; when you do your own Will, and when his: I do not mean when you do that which God wills, but when you do that for this Reason, because God wills it.

This accurate Self-Observation, and taking heed not only to our Ways, but our very Hearts, what respect we have to, what Acknowledgments we make of God in our whole Course, this is of most excellent use in the bringing us under his Government.

For by this we discover the most close and secret, the most subtile and undiscern'd Artifice, whereby Men are kept in Disobedience, or at least from their Obedience to God, that I account to be Self: Whilst this is the prevailing Reason of a Man's Performances, tho that which he does, may for the Matter of it, be good, and the Will of God; yet I doubt he will be accounted to serve himself, and not God; and so to do his own, and not the Divine Will.

And until it comes to this, that the Consideration of the Will of God has more

Force upon me, and sways more with me than mine own Inclination or Will, I am not yet in that Subjection unto God, nor do I make such Acknowledgment of God's Sovereignty over me, which I ought; I do not behave my self towards him, as my Supreme Lord; but I live and act as if I were Supreme my self, and had none over me to whom I must pay Homage.

This Direction supposes and infers divers Truths; as, 1. That we should not act rashly. 2. That we should do all our Works with Consideration and Care, not inadvertently and oscitantly, but in the use of our Minds. 3. That we should act from the best Reason, and always follow, or be determin'd by the greater Good. 4. That the Will of God is more excellent than mine own; and ought to be preferred not only when they are in Competition as Opposites, but when they are together; yet then they are not to be coordinate, but mine must be brought into Subjection, and be subordinate to God's.

Be frequent in Acknowledgments of God's Authority.

4. Be frequent in express and actual Acknowledgments of God's Authority over us, and in acting with explicit Thoughts of it. We cannot attain to an Habit and Temper in an ordinary Way, but by often repeated Actions, and almost continual Exercise.

If we design to be in State and Habit righteous, we must first do many Actions in Obedience to the Divine Law, and in Acknowledgment of the Sovereignty of God. If Exercise be wanting, all the rest will be ineffectual.

I believe that it is the Want of this which makes us so often fail in our attaining to any Vertue; we understand what we should do, we approve and like, it may be also we design it; but still we act not, and so fall short of it.

What I have hitherto said by Way of Direction, refers unto our selves; but there is something to be done with others: All I shall say to this may be reduced to four Heads.

1. That we take all Occasions to instruct and excite, to perswade and affect others by our Discourses, especially as to the Particulars already mentioned,

Take all Occasions to perswade others to submit unto it by your Instruction.

Lead them into the Knowledge of God's Law; rectifie their Apprehensions concerning God; reconcile their Thoughts unto him, &c.

Observe all fit Seasons of conveying Truth to Men's Minds; and when ever you are in best Disposition to discourse, and when the Company you are with, most capable to learn, and prepared to hear, neglect not such a Time.

When also you hear God and Goodness defied, and raillied, and spitefully and contemptuously treated by foolish senseless Sinners, do not out of Cowardise decline the Encounter, but if you can think your selves qualified to engage in Discourse with Men of an extravagant Humour, some Wit, unmeasurable Confidence, and a nimble Tongue,

if you can hope for the least Success, do you confront their senseless and impudent Raillery, their thin silly Sophisms with substantial, Reason modestly, and humbly, and charitably proposed, so, as that if they do not admit Truth at present, yet some Way may be made for it; and that they may be won by the good Qualities which make both your Opinion and your selves amiable.

By your Example,

2. Endeavour to incite and engage other Men by your Good Example to become obedient to God. *Let your Light so shine before them, &c.* that is, let the Beauty and Excellency of your Lives so attract and charm them, that they may be in love with that Law which directs, and with those Principles which influence your Practice, that when they come to see, that it is the Subjecting your Wills unto God's, and your owning of his Sovereign Authority, that is the Root on which all these pleasant Flowers grow; they may then take themselves from the Service of other Lords, or from doing their own Wills, and may put themselves under God's Government.

Let them behold such Humility, Contentedness, Patience, Courage, Quietness, Justice, Charity, Generosity, such Heroickness of Vertue proceeding from your living under God's Law, that they may all be prevail'd with to come into his Kingdom, and to resign themselves up to do his Will.

3. To

3. To these I may add, That where we have Power, and where the Place in which we are, allows and calls for it, we use our Authority over others, at least to restrain them from gross Actions that are evil, and compel them to outward good Acts. Thus should Masters exercise their Dominion over their Servants ; Fathers over Children ; Magistrates over Subjects.

4. Take the same Course to bring others under God's Government, which you have used and found effectual with your selves.

By the same Courses which we have used our selves.

If we would all begin with our selves, and first bring our own Souls into Subjection unto God, and then diligently observe with what Affection, in what Manner and Method we used our selves, and would then deal with other Men in the same Way ; this I am perswaded would prove a most effectual Course to reduce them to their Obedience : We should be gentle, patient, and unwearyed, &c.

5. The last Direction, is, to pray constantly and fervently unto God for the Assistances of his Grace, that he would prevent and excite our Endeavours, that he would co-operate and assist them, that he would make them effectual both in our selves, and towards others.

Pray for God's Grace to make all Endeavours effectual both in our selves and others.

Cry mightily unto God, that he would take away the *stony Heart*, the obstinate unpliant Will,

Will ; that he would *renew us in the Spirit of our Mind* ; that he would subdue every Inclination , every Thought into Obedience unto him ; that he would make the rebellious Sons of Men a *willing and obedient People* ; that he would make such farther Discoveries of his Glory, that all Eyes may behold it ; that he would make so clear a Manifestation of his Will, of the Goodness, of the Necessity of Subjection unto it, that all Men may love and do it.

Particularly, that the Gospel-Revelation may be better understood, and more firmly believed, and more heartily loved by all the World ; that whatever stands in the Way of it, and hinders it from having its Course, may be removed ; that he would *consume that wicked One by the Spirit of his Mouth, and destroy him by the Brightness of his Coming* ; that he would appear in so much Glory, as to daze the Eyes of all Beholders, that they who will not see now, may see and be ashamed.

He that considers the State in which Mankind are, how corrupted into Brutishness, how degenerated into Devilism, and how little Efficacy all the Methods which God has yet used for their Recovery, have ; how the Gospel-Revelation it self falls short of the good Design of it :

He that sees how many there are in the World, who bid open Defiance to God, and to his Christ, and to all Goodness and Vertue ; and how many more that wear a
Mask

Mask of Religion, but are secret and hearty Enemies unto it, and whose Aim it is to throw off God's Yoke: How few of those that are sincere in their Profession, who indeed mean what they make shew of, and are as they seem! How few of these attain to any tolerable Perfection! How frequent are their Relapses! how many their Miscarriages! how little do they grow in Goodness! how unlike are they to their Pattern! how short, how defective at best?

He who considers these Things, and how Disproportionate the Endeavours of the few Good are (tho assisted by that Grace which does ordinarily co-operate) to this Design, to raise themselves and others out of this sunk imperfect State; to reform this evil World; to make bad Men good, and good Men better; to erect the Throne of God, and to exalt it above all other; to bring all Men to acknowledge the Sovereignty of that God whom they know so little, and love less; nay, whom out of Wickedness, and a profane Stupidity, they would dispute out of Being; to bring those to believe and obey the Gospel, who now burlesque, and make Sport with it.

When the Case is thus, that we have all corrupted our Way, it is Time for us now to lift up our Voice to Heaven, and to cry mightily.

How long, Lord, holy and true, wilt thou thus abandon the Works of thine Hand,

Hands, and leave Mankind to be thus miserably enslaved by the Devil? How long shall thy Truth be darkned with Falshood and Lies, and Evil prevail against Goodness? How is it, that the Seed of the Serpent does not only bruise the Heel, but in a manner Break the Head of the Seed of the Womrn? Wherefore doest thou suffer thy Son Christ to be the Minister of Sin? Why is that great Undertaking of his no more available to the mending the World, and the reducing the rebellious Sons of Men unto that Allegiance to Heaven, which they have so universally cast off?

O Lord, it is time for thee to put to thine Hand, to shew thy self in behalf of Truth and Goodness, which are so every where trampled on and despised, and to vindicate thine own Honour from all those Affronts and Contumelies, which stupid and disingenuous Men, which rebellious Spirits have cast upon it.

Give, O God, a fuller Accomplishment to thy most gracious Promises than yet they have had; *Let the Knowledge of the Lord cover the Earth, as the Waters do the Sea: Let the Isles be converted, let the Numbers of the Gentiles come unto thee; let the despised Jews see him whom they have pierced; and bewailing their long obstinacy, become his Followers: Let all those who have the Form of Godliness, have also the Life and Power of it: Let the People*

ple be all righteous: Let all the Inhabitants of the World fear and serve thee. And as thou hast said, *Let there be no more Curse; but let the Throne of God, and of the Lamb be set up in it. Let all the People praise and serve thee; and be thou their Defence and Glory.* Amen, Amen.

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